

Israeli gunships attack Hizbollahis

RASHAYA, Lebanon (AP) — Authorities said Israeli helicopter gunships blasted bases of resistance fighters the Bekaa Valley Saturday. Police said two Cobra helicopters staged the attack at 6:30 a.m. (0430 GMT), strafing and rocketing positions of the Shiite Muslim Hizbollah (Party of God) around the village of Qalia for more than an hour. The Israeli military command denied the incident occurred. It would be the first Israeli attack in Lebanon this year. No casualties were reported from the rare attack in Syria-policed territory just two kilometers north of Israel's self-proclaimed "security zone" in South Lebanon. Police said the raid came after guerrillas attacked an Israeli patrol in the village of Kawtuba just across the line of the "security zone" Friday night, touching off a 15-minute firefight. A police spokesman said Israeli gunners retaliated by an artillery barrage on the Bekaa Villages of Zelaya, Qalia and 'Ain Al Tineh shortly before the air strike.

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'Iran lost \$1 trillion in war with Iraq'

NICOSIA (R) — Iran lost one trillion dollars during the 1980-88 Gulf war with Iraq, Iranian President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani said Saturday. Rafsanjani told a conference on reconstruction that hundreds of villages and towns had been completely destroyed in the war. "The devastation was so extensive that even to us the figures seem exaggerated. These figures are astronomical and hard to imagine for a developing country. The direct and indirect losses total \$600 billion and if we consider other expenses it amounts to one trillion," Rafsanjani said in remarks carried by the National news agency IRNA. Rafsanjani said 15 Iranian towns and 1,200 villages had been destroyed, including the southern port cities of Abadan and Khorramshahr, among the most prosperous cities before the war. He pinned the blame for some of the destruction on western countries which he said had helped Iraq. Iran and Iraq ended the fighting in 1988 but full peace was achieved only after Iraq invaded Kuwait Aug. 2.

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Saddam speech today

NICOSIA (AP) — A Pan-Arab speech by Iraqi President Saddam Hussein will be televised Sunday morning over Iraqi radio and television, the Iraqi News Agency reported Saturday night. The speech, broadcast at 1100 GMT (0800 local time) will mark the 70th anniversary of the establishment of the Iraqi army.

Anti-war activists call for volunteers

LONDON (AP) — Anti-war campaigners called Saturday for more volunteers in the next 10 days to join those already in a peace camp on the border between Iraq and Saudi Arabia. Members of the London-based Gulf Peace Team told reporters that they were asking volunteers to join the camp before Jan. 15. "That is the day which may decide the future of the world," Buddhist monk Junsei Terasan, 40, said at a news conference. Fifteen anti-war activists were to fly to the Gulf from Britain next week to join about 31 other people already camped on the border about 160 kilometres from Kuwait City and 480 kilometres from Baghdad.

Mugabe holds Gulf crisis talks

HARARE (R) — Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe, whose country joined the U.N. Security Council on Jan. 1, starts a 10-day tour of three West African states Sunday with the Gulf crisis a top issue for a discussion. The former chairman of the 102-nation Non-Aligned Movement, will pay state visits to Nigeria, Ghana and Senegal ahead of the Jan. 15 U.N. deadline for Iraq to leave Kuwait. "The president will sound out the opinions of his colleagues on the situation in the Middle East," an official said. Mugabe, who became Zimbabwe's first premier on independence from Britain in 1980 and president in 1987, backs U.N. measures against Iraq but says impartial, non-aligned states would be better placed to negotiate peace than Arab countries or the United States.

Kahane suspect given time to ponder

NEW YORK (R) — Lawyers for the accused assassin of extremist Israeli rabbi Meir Kahane say they may ask their client to plead not guilty by reason of insanity. A Manhattan judge gave the lawyers and suspect Al Sayyid Nosair 10 days to make the decision. Nosair's family told police shortly after he was arrested for the assassination last November that Nosair was under psychiatric care and taking Prozac, an anti-depressant drug which some people claim can cause violent behaviour.

Iraqi Christians hold prayer for peace

BAGHDAD (AP) — Thousands of Iraqi Christians held a day of prayer for peace Saturday. "Lord we pray for peace and forgiveness to be achieved on earth," said Bishop Ishu Silwa in a sermon to some 500 people at the Virgin Mary Chaldean Church in downtown Baghdad. The Chaldean Church, an offshoot of the Roman Catholic Church, is the largest of Iraq's Christian groups.

Teresa begs Bush, Saddam to avert war

CALCUTTA (R) — Mother Teresa, the 1979 Nobel Peace prize winner, made an emotional appeal Saturday to U.S. President George Bush and Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein to avert a Gulf war. "I come to you with tears and God's love to plead for the poor and those who will become poor if the war we all dread happens," the 80-year-old Roman Catholic nun said in a statement. A war would leave many widowed, orphaned and disabled, she said. "I prayed on bended knees to save them. The whole world is praying that you will open your hearts in love."

Round-table conference calls for special U.N. fund to help Jordan

By Mariam M. Shahin
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A conference of senior statesmen and international experts ended here Saturday with a call to establish a long-term fund to foster stability and security in the Middle East as well as an interim fund to help Jordan cope with the emergency situation that would ensue in the event of a military conflict in the Gulf.

Announcing the recommendations of the one-day round-table conference, former Turkish Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit and several other participants severely criticised the failure of the international community to reimburse Jordan, which spent \$55 million in assisting evacuees from Kuwait following the Iraqi invasion in August. The Kingdom has received only \$12 million towards its expenses.

His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, who had called the conference, said the gathering strongly supported the idea of setting up an interim United Nations fund to help Jordan, particularly in view of the possibility that the Kingdom would have to host over two million refugees fleeing the war theatre

if a military conflict erupted in the Gulf. The central theme that stood out throughout the deliberations, as indicated by most participants, was clear: While there is an obvious zeal and enthusiasm in the American-led military

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Jordan's 'terra media' posture is threatened

Following is the full text of a statement issued by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan on Dec. 18 calling for a meeting of eminent persons to meet to discuss the impact of the Gulf crisis.

"Over the years since 1967 we have, in our attempts to achieve socio-economic development in Jordan, tried to deal with politics on the assumption that people matter. Such a course has not been easy and has, in many instances, placed us under extreme pressures. However, today, as we look at the decade ahead, our responsibilities to the emerging Arab order transcend our purely national dimension. By definition, many of these responsibilities are trans-national in their essence.

"It is therefore timely to invite a small group of eminent individuals to examine these issues trans-nationally. The demographic pressures, whether from the East

(Kuwait-Iraq) or the West (the West Bank-Gaza), have to be tackled creatively to avoid human tragedies that can dwarf those of 1948 and 1967. Whether relating to evacuees or refugees, an objective assessment is needed immediately. The Iraq-Kuwait crisis and the deteriorating situation in the occupied territories are threatening to destabilise Jordan's traditional posture of a 'terra media' in the midst of the different hot-spots of the Middle East.

"The United Nations Economic and Social Commission in Western Asia, in its study issued in November 1990 on the impact of the Gulf crisis on the Jordanian economy, has concluded that 'the response of the international community to Jordan's drastic needs for assistance has been negligible. Jordan has fully cooperated with the United Nations in the execution of Security Council Resolu-

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Foreigners evacuate Mogadishu

NAIROBI (AP) — Italy and the United States on Saturday began evacuating foreigners from Somalia's war-torn capital of Mogadishu, where as many as 1,500 people have died in a week of anti-government fighting.

Italian Foreign Minister Gianni De Michelis said two Italian cargo planes left Nairobi at 1:30 p.m. (1030 GMT) to pick up 190 Italians and 70 other foreigners, including French, Germans, Soviets and Ethiopians. Meanwhile, U.S. helicopters flew from an aircraft carrier to evacuate 60 to 70 people gathered at the U.S. embassy compound in the seaside capital, the Italian official said at a news conference in Rome.

An estimated 500 foreigners have been stuck in Mogadishu since the fighting erupted Dec. 30.

The fighting pits rebels intent on overthrowing President Mohammad Siad Barre against government troops. The rebel United Somali Congress (USC) accuses Siad Barre of atrocities and demands that he either surrender or leave the country of eight million which he has ruled since staging a bloodless coup in 1969.

A rebel spokesman estimated Saturday as many as 1,500 people had been killed in the warfare and three times that many wounded.

Foreign governments previously insisted on a halt to the fighting before any rescue operation; the rebels said they would abide by a temporary truce to allow for the evacuation.

War will not be limited — Ramadan

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Yassin Ramadan warned Saturday that war in the Gulf would extend to other Arab and Islamic countries if the United States attacked Iraq.

"If the direct aggression is launched against Iraq, the Arab and Islamic arena will be one operation theater," Ramadan was quoted as saying by an Iraqi newspaper.

Ramadan said U.S. administration will push the whole world into a catastrophe if it leads multinational forces in an attack against Iraq.

He also accused the United States of preparing for the war because it wants to control Gulf oil and not to restore the ex-Kuwaiti royal family.

But he said the Iraqis will fight if attacked.

"The confrontation has revealed that the U.S. administration does not want to defend the corrupt family, but it wants to control and plunder our wealth," Ramadan said.

"It is our duty that we should defend our land and our wealth — and we will fight those who want to plunder it," Ramadan said.

Iraq threatened Friday to retaliate for Britain's expulsion of eight Iraqi embassy staff and 67 private citizens.

"Iraq denounces this unjustified step and considers it part of a series of measures reflecting aggression and hatred colonial mentality," a Foreign Ministry spokesman said.

"Iraq reserves the right to retaliate and adopt appropriate measures in due course," the

spokesman said in a statement carried by INA.

He did not elaborate but the statement raised the prospect of tit-for-tat ejections. Britain has a skeleton staff of six diplomats in the Iraqi capital.

The expelled Iraqi embassy staff flew to Jordan Friday.

One of them, Press Counselor Naiel Hassan, told reporters in Amman they numbered only six because two of the eight ordered out by Britain had already been at home in Iraq.

Hassan told reporters in Amman that "if there is any war against Iraq I am sure there are so many Arabs and Muslims in Western countries and of course they are going to attack targets there."

But he said the reasons given by Britain for the expulsions were false. "They claim we are spreading terrorism and two of the diplomats they are accusing have been in Baghdad for over two months," Hassan said.

Britain, which said the Iraqis were expelled because of public threats linked to the Gulf crisis, gave the other Iraqis another week to leave.

Iraq's Deputy Foreign Minister Mohammad Saeed Al Shafah Friday reiterated Baghdad's threat to attack Israel with chemical weapons if it breaks out in the Gulf, according to the Iranian news agency IRNA.

"We consider Israel as an important factor of the American aggressive machine. If war begins we would definitely attack Israel with binary chemical weapons," Shafah was quoted as

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His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, along with international participants in a conference on the impact of the Gulf crisis, addresses a press

conference to announce the outcome of the round-table meeting (Photo by Yusef Al 'Allan)

12-year-old shot dead near Nablus; 14 wounded in Gaza

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Israeli troops opened fire on Palestinian protesters in an occupied West Bank refugee camp Saturday, killing a 12-year-old boy, Arab reports said.

Palestinian journalists identified the boy as Wabul Shubaki, saying he died en route to a hospital after being shot in the head in a clash at the Fara refugee camp near Nablus, the West Bank's largest city.

A demonstration also erupted Saturday at the Jabalya refugee camp in the occupied Gaza Strip.

Officials at the Ahli and Shifa hospitals in Gaza City said they treated 14 wounded Palestinians who were shot with live bullets

and rubber-coated metal pellets, including a four-year-old girl injured in both legs. Israel Radio, however, put the number of wounded at eight.

The Radio linked the incident in Jabalya to Friday night's funeral of Mohammad Qatanani, 30, a bus driver from Jabalya.

Qatanani was shot to death by an Israeli reserve soldier Friday after he swerved his bus into an army officer's car near Gaza, killing a woman passenger and injuring four others. Police said it was probable that Qatanani acted out of nationalist motives.

Shubaki's death brought to 793 the number of Palestinians killed by Israeli soldiers or civilians during the three-year uprising, according to an AP count.

An additional 325 Palestinians have been slain by fellow Arabs on suspicion of being pro-Israeli collaborators. Fifty-seven Israelis also have died in the violence, the AP said.

Witnesses in the Gaza Strip said clashes in Jabalya, where six Palestinians were wounded Friday, resumed Saturday when youths began stoning soldiers.

Among the wounded treated by a local clinic and a hospital were a four-year-old girl shot in the leg and a 60-year-old woman hit in the hand, Palestinians said.

Clashes between demonstrators and troops were reported from several West Bank centres, including Hebron, Jenin and Ramallah.

Bush vows no secret diplomacy with Iraq

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — President George Bush said Saturday the United States would not engage in secret diplomacy with Iraq at next week's talks in Geneva and would stress U.S. determination that Iraq forces leave Kuwait or "face the terrible consequences."

In a radio address broadcast in the United States, Bush tried to justify sending Americans into a faraway war, saying it may be necessary to defend the "new order" in the post-cold war era. He promised any conflict would not be a long one like Vietnam.

"At stake is not simply some distant country called Kuwait. At stake is the kind of world we will inhabit," he said.

Even as he laid the psychological groundwork for war, he was preparing to send Secretary of State James Baker to talks in what he says will be a final chance for peace in the Gulf.

Baker departs Sunday to consult Gulf allies. In Geneva Wednesday he is to meet Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz in the first high-level direct talks between the two nations since Iraq invaded Kuwait on Aug. 2.

"This will not be secret diplomacy at work," Bush said. "Secretary Baker will restate, in person, a message for (Iraqi leader) Saddam Hussein: Withdraw from Kuwait unconditionally and immediately or face the terrible consequences."

Bush had talks and lunch Saturday with U.N. Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar at the presidential Camp David retreat in Maryland, near Washington.

The meeting suggested a possible new U.N. attempt for peace. Perez de Cuellar has said he is working backstage on an initiative.

Perez de Cuellar said he wants world leaders to work diplomatically before the U.N.-imposed Jan. 15 deadline for Iraq to withdraw.

Bush has said he saw no need for further U.N. action, but was anxious to hear what Perez de Cuellar might have to say on new peace initiatives.

Iraqi Ambassador Abdul Amir Al Anbari, who spoke to the secretary-general Friday as Baghdad announced it was accepting Washington's offer for talks, said Perez de Cuellar was "waiting and assessing."

He does not want to have a big crowd in the kitchen," he added. Anbari said he told the secretary-general that any U.S.-Iraq dialogue had to be comprehensive and include the fate of the Palestinians.

He said Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat had done everything the United States had requested in order to have a dialogue.

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Aziz invites EC envoys to Iraq

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraq Saturday declined an offer of talks in Luxembourg next week with European Community (EC) foreign ministers, but invited EC envoys to Baghdad, the Iraqi News Agency (INA) said.

It quoted a Foreign Ministry spokesman as saying that Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz sent his apologies for not accepting the invitation.

The talks were to have been held in Luxembourg Jan. 10, the day after Aziz is scheduled to meet U.S. Secretary of State James Baker in Geneva.

The spokesman noted that the EC withdrew an offer of talks last month when Washington and Baghdad failed to agree on dates for a meeting between them.

He said Aziz told Luxembourg Foreign Minister Jacques Poos that, in Iraq's view, such behaviour was "inappropriate and harmed the principles of dealings between countries."

"If the European 'troika' wishes (to conduct) a dialogue with Iraq then we welcome its visit to Baghdad."

"We express our great appreciation to European public opinion and the European people, but we resent the submissive policies pursued by certain European governments towards the aggressive and haughty American policies."

"These governments should realise that he who wants to talk to Iraq should visit Baghdad and talk directly to officials there."

Saddam, Vauzelle hold extended talks

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — Michel Vauzelle, president of the French National Assembly's foreign affairs commission, met with Iraqi President Saddam Hussein for four and a half hours here Saturday in talks to avert a Gulf war.

"I have come here to listen and I must say that I learned a lot about the situation from President Saddam Hussein," Vauzelle told reporters after the meeting.

"I am not optimistic but neither am I pessimistic," he said. "I hope everything will soon be over."

A French diplomat, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said Vauzelle met with Saddam to receive answers to questions he had earlier submitted to Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz.

No details were available on the substance of the talks. Vauzelle had earlier held talks with Aziz after arriving here Thursday.

The European Community (EC) has invited Aziz to Luxembourg next week, and France has unveiled a peace plan calling for talks on Middle East issues after Iraq pulls out of Kuwait.

President Francois Mitterrand Friday suggested in Paris that another U.N. Security Council meeting precede any attack to drive Iraq from Kuwait. U.S. President George Bush said in Washington he thought no such meeting was needed.

The 12-nation EC, meeting as Iraq accepted a U.S. offer to hold direct talks with Secretary

of State James Baker next Wednesday, rebuffed a French proposal to open immediate discussions with Aziz.

"Our initiative should be seen as complementary to the U.S. initiative," said Jacques Poos, Luxembourg's foreign minister. "There is nothing in the statement that can ruffle American feathers."

In a statement after an emergency session Friday, the foreign ministers said, "the entire responsibility for war or peace rests with the Iraqi government alone."

If Iraq withdrew its forces from Kuwait, they said, it "should receive the assurance not to be subject to a military intervention."

French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas led off the meeting by offering a peace plan under which the EC would hold immediate talks with Aziz and promise him an international conference on Mideast issues.

"Europe could not remain with its arms folded," he told the other ministers.

The White House said it would study the French proposal. But the United States in the past has rejected linking the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the Gulf crisis.

In their final statement, the ministers said only that when the crisis ended, they would be willing "to contribute actively to a settlement of the other problems of the region and establish a situation of security, stability and development there."

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First shots fired in U.S. Congress dispute over Gulf

Kennedy assails Bush's 'arrogance'

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — Partisan clashes erupted in the Senate Friday over U.S. Gulf policy as Senator Edward Kennedy accused President George Bush of the worst executive arrogance since the Watergate scandal toppled Richard Nixon in 1974.

The clashes were a foretaste of a full-dress debate on the Gulf crisis that Democratic leader George Mitchell said could start as early as next Thursday.

"We have not seen such arrogance in a president since Watergate," said Kennedy, a Massachusetts Democrat, referring to Bush's claim that he does not need congressional authority to go to war.

Although alternatives to war to force Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait had not been exhausted, Kennedy said, "President Bush continues headlong on his path to an unconstitutional war."

Republicans called on the Senate to support the president by sending a message of unity to Baghdad and said Congress had been standing on the sidelines.

"Let's not bash Bush. Let's back him," said Republican Senator Alfonse D'Amato.

Mitchell promised the Senate would get a chance to debate and vote on Bush's Gulf policy. He said the debate could begin as early as next Thursday, depending on the outcome of Secretary of State James Baker's meeting with Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz in Switzerland the previous day.

Although Congress broadly supports Bush's goal of getting Iraq to withdraw its troops from Kuwait, the debate is likely to be contentious.

Democrats Tom Harkin of Iowa and Brock Adams of Washington introduced a resolution calling on the president to seek prior congressional approval to go to war. A similar resolution was introduced in the House.

Also in the House, Democrat Joseph Kennedy, Senator Kennedy's nephew, introduced a resolution barring U.S. military action against Iraq for at least one year.

Senate and House leaders are keeping Congress technically in session to be prepared to deal

with the Gulf crisis. Originally, Congress was to have recessed until Jan. 23 after formally reconvening Thursday.

While the resolutions would have no binding effect, they could make an important political statement at a time when newly convened lawmakers are reporting their constituents are nervous about prospects for war in the Middle East.

Any vote for such a resolution could also seriously weaken the credibility of Bush's threat to use military force against Iraq.

Asked whether a full-fledged debate on Gulf policy should begin before Jan. 15, the U.N. deadline for Iraq to withdraw, Mitchell replied: "Oh, yes. Sure."

Harkin and Adams had

insisted on an immediate debate on their resolution, thwarting leadership plans to defer debate and action until later in the month.

"This resolution is necessary because we've been adrift in this country for some time, letting the executive branch take us from one military action to another," Harkin said, citing invasions of Grenada and Panama.

"Now is the time and here is the place to debate this issue, not after the bullets start flying," and Congress will have forfeited the ability to express any hesitation about the use of force, he said.

Congress should declare war on Iraq if the United States is going to fight the Iraqis after Jan. 15, a former head of the U.S. military said.

Admiral William Crowe, who retired 15 months ago as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said a declared war would not require an immediate, all-out attack to drive Iraq out of Kuwait but would give Bush more options for dealing with the crisis.

"I think if we're going to go to war, they (Congress) should declare war. They shouldn't leave the president hanging," Crowe said in an interview after a speech in which he both praised and raised concerns about U.S. military operations in the Gulf.

"I've always thought it was foolish to fight a war without

declaring war, because we've got a lot more latitude legally," he said. The Bush administration has informally asked Congress to endorse its operations in the Middle East but has not asked for a formal declaration of war.

Crowe, who said he is no longer privy to administration thinking, said in his speech that U.S. military performance in the Gulf has been superb, but he said Bush's decision in November to build up forces from 250,000 to more than 400,000 has led to criticism. The Defense Department said Thursday that about 325,000 U.S. troops are now in the region.

"Probably, not having more extensive, more broad consultations with Congress was a mistake," Crowe told a conference on the Gulf crisis at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), a private think tank.

The retired admiral questioned whether the new troop buildup allows the flexibility needed for a peaceful solution, saying it increases the prospects for combat and "has a momentum of its own."

"It hasn't closed the prospects for peace, but it has certainly reduced them," he said.

Crowe called for clear, simply military objectives if the United States attacks Iraq, beginning with military action to tighten the economic blockade, followed, if necessary, by extensive air attacks on strategic targets all over Iraq, allowing enough time for them to take effect before attacking from the ground.

"You cannot win by air alone, but if it's ever possible, it should be in Iraq," he said, pointing out that virtually treeless Iraq is far different from Vietnam where the United States got bogged down in a long war.

U.S. forces would win a ground battle, he said, but with high casualties.

He said it could take between two and six months to drive Iraq out of Kuwait and that reducing the loss of lives should be more important than ending the operations quickly.

"It is not the justness of our cause but the fear of disproportionate human sacrifice that concerns many Americans," he said.

Sudanese celebrate Sharia

KHARTOUM (AP) — Thousands of Sudanese are gathering daily to pay homage to Sudan's military leader in a series of demonstrations organized to celebrate reactivation of Islamic law in the country.

Restoration of Islamic Law, and the demonstrations celebrating it, present the clearest evidence since Omar Hassan Al-Bashir's June 30, 1989 coup of his intention to turn Sudan into a theocratic state.

At the first demonstration, Friday night, Bashir led chants of "Allahu Akbar" from the podium.

Hundreds of thousands in the crowd and listening on radio or watching on television in their homes raised their hands and pledged to Bashir: "We will follow you in good times and bad, so long as you follow and obey Allah."

Government organizers said Islamic Law requires the demonstrations of "bai'ya," the "pledging of allegiance" to Bashir as the national leader. They will continue for several days.

As Sharia is interpreted in Sudan, the "bai'ya" mandate enables the ruler to decree anything for the country's welfare. Those who do not carry out his decrees, without question, are deemed enemies to the welfare of Islam and Muslims.

Bashir reactivated Sharia last Monday, 5½ years after it fell into disuse. His edict covers only civil and administrative questions and restricts Sharia to Muslim northern regions. The Christian and animist south, where civil war has raged almost eight years, is exempted at least temporarily.

For now, the edict omits harsh criminal punishments like amputating thieves' hands and flogging people who drink alcohol.

Such sentences caused widespread international criticism after Sudan's last military ruler Jaafar Numeiri enacted the Islamic code in September 1983.

"Forget tribal, sectarian, partisan and regional affiliations," Bashir exhorted the Sudanese. "Unite under the banner of 'la ilaha illa Allah'."

Just under three-fourths of the more than 22 million citizens of this country are Muslims, of Arab descent. Since Sudan's independence in 1956, they traditionally have held political power over non-Muslims, mainly ethnically African southerners.

In his speech, Bashir told the crowd his regime would forge a model of Islam to become an example for the world's other Muslims to follow.

Already he has been praised by Iran, which became a strict Islamic state 12 years ago. Tehran sent a high-level delegation of clerics and government officials to Khartoum Tuesday to congratulate him on his edict.

Meanwhile, the government's financial institutions have started adopting measures towards applying Islamic Law which prohibits any kind of interest.

Finance Minister Abdul Rahim Hamid said in a statement published Saturday in the local Al Sudan Al Hadith newspaper that the central bank was instructed to take measures to implement Sharia but did not say what they were.

We said insurance companies will from now on operate as interest-free cooperatives. The government's profit from these companies would be transferred to the social assistance fund, a public organization to help people and institutions in need.

Iraq primes elite guards to counter ground assault

DHAHRAN (R) — Iraq is pinning its hopes on 60,000 elite Republican Guards to counter any thrust by multinational forces through newly bolstered first lines of defenses in Kuwait, military sources said Saturday.

But they said any advance into the open desert by six guards divisions, dug in with Soviet-designed T-72 tanks in an arc across southern Iraq, would play into the hands of allied strategy in the Gulf.

The military sources said Iraq's barrier of sand banks, minefields, ditches, barbed wire and bunkers set up along Kuwait's southern border with Saudi Arabia was being extended westwards into southern Iraq.

"The defensive belt is being extended about 100 kilometres, westwards to try and head off a flanking attack," said one of the sources.

The allies remained confident that backed by sustained bombing they could break quickly through the crust of Iraq's static defenses and try to draw the guards out of their second line positions.

Iraq, which has two guard divisions based in Baghdad to protect capital, faced a dilemma in any campaign on the ground.

It could either hold its guards back to protect its southern flank, giving up the oil-rich emirate that it vowed Baghdad

would never surrender, or throw them into the battle.

If it pushed its best troops into the fray, their poor supply lines would make them easy prey for marauding bombers and allied tank forces, the sources said.

The guards played a prominent role during the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war and they spearheaded Iraq's invasion of Kuwait on Aug. 2.

There were signs that a ninth Republican Guards division was being formed but the sources said this would draw vital men and equipment from other army units.

"The guards are trusted," said one source. "They are better-paid, better-fed and get more holiday than other army formations."

Saddam Hussein told his generals in Kuwait during a new year's eve visit to the troops that he had placed 60 divisions, or roughly 600,000 men, at the Gulf frontline.

U.S. army intelligence suspects that Iraq has more than 510,000 troops, 4,000 tanks, 2,500 armoured personnel carriers and 2,700 artillery pieces in Kuwait, army Lieutenant-Colonel Greg Peppin told reporters in Dhahran Wednesday.

The Pentagon puts the size of the U.S.-led multinational force in the Gulf at about 580,000, mostly on the ground in Saudi Arabia.

U.S. allies welcome Baker-Aziz meeting

LONDON (Agencies) — Washington's Gulf allies have welcomed Iraq's decision to meet the United States for direct talks next week as a return to diplomacy and a hope that war might yet be avoided.

German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher told German television: "I believe that war can be avoided."

"The fact that there will be a meeting between the American and Iraqi foreign ministers and between the European Community 'troika' and the Iraqi foreign minister confirms my impression and strengthens it."

Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz accepted a U.S. offer of talks in Geneva with Secretary of State James Baker Jan. 9, less than a week before the Jan. 15 United Nations deadline for Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait.

European Community foreign ministers decided to invite Aziz to hold separate talks in Luxembourg with the EC Jan. 10.

Genscher said there could be no compromises with Iraq but said: "It is essential that we give diplomacy a chance. We must not allow ourselves to be forced into automatically following the path of war."

French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas was also more optimistic about the chances for peace following the announcement of the two meetings.

"I think now that the way is open with a little more hope than before of a peaceful solution," Japan's Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

tion to the crisis. Many difficulties still face us, but the essential thing is that there should be a dialogue," he told reporters after the EC meeting in Luxembourg.

British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd was more reserved, seeing Baghdad's acceptance of the American invitation as good news. But he said "the substance has to follow."

"The substance obviously being the reversing of aggression, in line with what the United Nations has required. I've always thought that if there was a move by Iraq it would come at the last minute," Hurd said.

Egypt, one of Washington's main Arab partners in the anti-Iraq alliance which has up to 580,000 troops ranged against Baghdad, said it hoped the talks would lead to Iraq's immediate and unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait.

"Egypt has always sought to achieve a peaceful settlement of the Gulf crisis so as to spare the region the calamities of a destructive war," Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Boutros Boutros Ghali said in a statement.

Japan said it hoped the meeting would result in peace in the Middle East.

"The government of Japan strongly hopes that this dialogue will achieve a constructive result and will lead to a peaceful solution," Japan's Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

Major to tour Gulf

LONDON (R) — Prime Minister John Major visits British forces in the Gulf this week, days before the United Nations deadline for Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait expires.

Britain has 34,000 troops in the Gulf, the largest Western contingent after the United States, and British leaders have frequently made clear that Iraq must pull out or face the consequences from the huge multinational force lined up in the region.

Although Major has used less hardline language in condemning Iraqi President Saddam Hussein than his predecessor Margaret Thatcher, he is no less determined that Iraq must pull out of Kuwait.

"Nobody wants a war if it is avoidable but we cannot avoid a conflict at any price," he told the Daily Mail newspaper on Friday.

"We cannot avoid a conflict at the price of him gaining from what he has done."

U.S. Desert Shield costs, without combat put at \$30b

WASHINGTON (AP) — Operation Desert Shield will cost the United States \$30 billion this fiscal year even if war does not break out, Congress' accounting agency said Friday.

The chief of the General Accounting Office said if fighting does occur, the Gulf operation would cost hundreds of millions of dollars daily, and perhaps more.

"The cost estimates will go up very, very rapidly if we go into full-fledged conflict," the agency's comptroller general, Charles Bowsher, told the House Budget Committee.

The Bush administration has never officially estimated what it will cost to maintain the planned 150,000-troop force in the Gulf. But administration officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, also have put the price tag at about \$30 billion.

When U.S. troop levels were going to be capped at about 200,000 troops last fall, the administration estimated the fiscal 1991 cost at about \$15 billion. The fiscal year began Oct. 1.

Bowsher said his estimate included the costs of deploying the troops in the Middle East, calling up reserves and providing the extra support they need. The figure does not count the \$100

billion it will cost to build and equip Desert Shield forces that otherwise would be in active duty elsewhere.

The comptroller general complained that Pentagon officials have not cooperated fully in providing the accounting data with information it would need to make a precise estimate. But he said he based his estimate was accurate.

"I think the Pentagon has the numbers, they have the estimates," said the budget committee's chairman, Representative Leon Panetta. "I think the State Department has the numbers, they have the estimates. The problem here is a political problem of what the country is going to focus on in the next few days."

But Representative William Gradison said he believed it was too early for the administration to make cost estimates.

"The last thing we need is hastily gathered, half-baked data," he said.

At the same meeting, a former assistant secretary of defense for manpower, Lawrence Korb, said he believed Desert Shield will cost \$23 billion this year if no fighting occurs, and up to \$2 billion a day if war begins.

Misratah summit ended in failure, report says

CAIRO (AP) — A four-nation country summit held in Libya on Thursday to find a way to avert a possible war in the Gulf had ended up in failure, reports by leading Egyptian journalists indicated.

The summit, comprising the host, Muammar Qadhafi, President Hosni Mubarak, Syrian President Hafez Al Assad, and Sudan's Omar Hassan Al-Bashir, found a report prepared a day earlier by a committee of their foreign ministers insufficient.

The papers presented by the ministers "were seen as not up to the level of the event...the crisis is greater and the situation is more grave," a report forwarded by the state-owned newspaper Al Gomhouriya said.

The newspaper editor, Mahmoud Al Ansary, said that foreign ministers of Egypt, Syria and Libya met in Cairo Wednesday to produce some thoughts about how to avert war, a visualisation on the situation after the crisis was solved either way and a statement in the names of their three presidents.

Ansary was among a group of newspaper editors who accompanied Mubarak during his short trip to Libya to attend the summit. Mubarak returned home early Friday.

The presidents agreed to a Mubarak suggestion that more study was needed and limited themselves to a general exchange of views and information, Ansary said.

Confusion shrouded the conference, proposed by Qadhafi, from the start. On Tuesday, Qadhafi announced news about a three-way conference involving Egypt, Syria and Libya and said it would be convened within hours but did not say exactly when or where.

He told a group of Egyptian newsmen visiting Tripoli that a fourth country might attend but left them guessing.

On Wednesday, Esmat Abdul Meguid of Egypt, Farouq Al Sharaa of Syria, Ibrahim Al-Bishri of Libya formed a foreign ministers committee and met in Cairo to prepare for the summit. There was no sign of the

fourth country. Hopes for holding the conference nevertheless diminished because of comments by official Egyptian sources and Arab diplomats.

An official termed Mubarak as "lukewarm" about the idea and said "Egypt doesn't see what can be done at this point." An Egyptian diplomat, who also requested anonymity, said Syria shared Cairo's views.

Ansary indicated that Mubarak and his entourage did not know the fourth partner in the summit until they reached Libya's Mediterranean coast of Misratah and saw Sudan's national flag which they mistook for that of Palestine or Iraq.

He said Qadhafi's obsession with the idea of unity of Arab masses was a prime factor behind his call for the conference and inviting Sudan to the meeting.

The call for the conference coincided with the beginning of what is called a year of unity marches and border destruction, in Libya, Ansary suggested.

Qadhafi thinks that by having the three leaders meet in Libya would help him "deepen the feeling of unity and insistence on abolishing border barriers," Ansary wrote.

Mubarak and Assad who was insisting on Cairo as a site, finally agreed to meet Qadhafi's desire.

Ibrahim Nafeh, editor of the leading state-owned newspaper Al-Ahram, also agreed that Mubarak was surprised by Bashir's appearance.

Nafeh said that despite the meeting, Mubarak and Bashir did not discuss how to improve relations strained mainly because of the opposing stands by on the Gulf crisis.

Egypt is leading Arab opposition to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait that started Aug. 2 and have sent more than 20,000 troops to the area. Sudan is more lenient and is opposing the presence of the U.S.-led forces in the Gulf.

Nafeh said Mubarak rejected Qadhafi's idea to gather him and Bashir in an attempt to reconcile differences on ground the time was improper.

U.S. halts Saudi arms sale

WASHINGTON (AP) — The administration of U.S. President George Bush has announced Friday it was halting a proposed \$15-billion arms sale to Saudi Arabia after consulting with leaders of the kingdom.

Once the crisis in the Gulf is resolved, the administration will reassess Saudi needs and decide what weapons it requires, said State Department spokesman Richard Boucher.

The decision will spare Bush a potentially bruising battle with Congress, which would have to approve the deal, at a time when he is pitted against many lawmakers over his Gulf policy.

Those lawmakers want Bush to promise he will get their permission before sending troops into combat against Iraq.

The arms package for the Saudis was to include F-15 fighter planes, Patriot anti-missile batteries, tanks and anti-armour weapons. Administration officials told lawmakers in October they expected to seek congressional approval for the sale by the end of January.

But at a closed-door briefing

for lawmakers Thursday, Secretary of State James Baker and Defence Secretary Dick Cheney said the deal was off.

In addition to wanting to avoid a fight with Congress, the administration has decided that Saudi Arabia has sufficient weapons for the time being to repel a possible Iraqi attack, said a source who spoke on condition of anonymity.

"We agreed that resolution of the Gulf crisis is our first priority and that we need to further assess Saudi arms needs...in the context of the post-crisis environment," said Boucher.

"Strong Saudi defence forces are an important element in regional stability and the U.S. will continue to assist Saudi Arabia in building such capabilities," he said.

The proposed deal was the second part of a weapons package the administration proposed for Saudi Arabia in response to Iraq's Aug. 2 invasion of Kuwait. In an attempt to defuse congressional objections to the unprecedented size of the deal, the administration divided it in

two. The first part consisted of \$7.3 billion in new weapons, including M-1A tanks, Tow anti-tank missiles, Bradley fighting vehicles, trucks and armoured personnel carriers. The weapons were those immediately available from U.S. stocks of defence manufacturers.

The second, larger batch was to include many items that could not have been delivered for at least 18 months.

The first package received congressional approval despite criticism that pouring such large amounts of weapons into the volatile region would escalate the arms race and risk U.S. technology falling into enemy hands.

Lawmakers noted that U.S. weapons in Kuwait were confiscated by Iraqi troops after the invasion.

But the administration won over reluctant lawmakers by arguing that withholding support for that sale would undermine support for the Desert Shield Operation among Arab partners in the anti-Iraq coalition.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION	
Tel: 773111-19	
PROGRAMME ONE	
15:30	Teletext
16:00	Koran
16:20	Programme review
16:35	Children's programme
17:35	Sports programme
18:00	News summary
18:10	Local programme
19:50	Programme review
20:30	News in Arabic
20:30	Arabic series
21:30	Programme review
21:45	Local programme
23:00	News summary in Arabic
PROGRAMME TWO	
17:30	Dorothee
19:00	News in French
19:15	Carnet de Notes
19:30	News in Hebrew
19:45	Varities programme
20:00	News in Arabic
20:30	Mother and Son
21:10	Sweet of the Sun - Tears of the Moon
22:00	News in English
22:20	Paradise
PRAYER TIMES	
05:10	Fajr
06:32	(Sunrise) Doha
11:41	Dhuhr
16:27	'Asr

CHURCHES	
16:50	Maghreb
18:12	'Isa
northerly moderate and seas calm.	
AMMAN	
Min./max. temp.	3 / 16
Aqaba	10 / 21
Deserts	2 / 18
Jordan Valley	10 / 22
Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 15, Aqaba 20. Humidity readings: Amman 70 per cent, Aqaba 38 per cent.	
USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS	
NIGHT DUTY	
AMMAN:	
Dr. Walid Al Masri	675485
Dr. Afrah Samhan	894611
Dr. Ahmad Othman	786384
Dr. Yousef Al Faqih	657909
First pharmacy	661912
Perdows pharmacy	783336
Al Asma pharmacy	657055
Nairokhi pharmacy	623672
Al Salam pharmacy	636730
Yacoub pharmacy	644945
Shmeisani pharmacy	637660
DEBID:	
Dr. Issam Al Saleh	(—)
Al Sharaa pharmacy	773825
ZARQA:	
Dr. Yousef Awad	(—)
Khalifeh pharmacy	985417
EMERGENCIES	
Food Control Centre	637111
Civil Defence Department	661111
Civil Defence Immediate	
Rescue	630341
Civil Defence Emergency	199
Road Police	192, 621111, 657777
Fire Brigade	891228
Blood Bank	775121
Highway Police	843402
Traffic Police	896300
Public Security Department	630321
Hotel Complaints	609800
Price Complaints	661176
Water and Sewerage	
Complaints	897467
Amman Municipality	
Complaints	787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance)	121
Overseas Calls	010230
Repairs	623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs	661101
Jordan Television	773111
Radio Jordan	774111

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De Marco calls for urgent efforts for peace conference

AMMAN (Agencies) — The president of the U.N. General Assembly called Saturday for swift action to convene an international Middle East peace conference, saying worsening tension in Israeli-occupied territories was unacceptable.

Guido de Marco, the first General Assembly leader to visit the occupied territories, told reporters at Amman airport after arriving from Israel: "We cannot accept the situation there to worsen further than what it is at the moment. (This) is a strong plea to start working on this international conference on the Middle East."

He added: "The sooner we start working on it the better." He said the situation in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, scene of a three-year-old uprising against Israeli rule, was marked by great tension and therefore it was in the interest of the region and the world to find a settlement.

The General Assembly voted last month for holding such a conference and the Security Council has in principle agreed to the idea, fiercely opposed by Israel.

De Marco toured some Palestinian camps in the West Bank and Gaza and inspected the work on the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), which helps more than two million Palestinian refugees. He also met Israeli and Palestinian officials.

De Marco, who is also Malta's deputy prime minister and foreign minister, said his visit to the occupied territories aimed at highlighting "the human dimension — the fundamental human rights and the right to self-determination."

He was met with little enthusiasm in Israel, which fears the international community may agree to Iraq's demand for an international peace conference on the Palestinian issue if the Gulf crisis is settled.

De Marco said one of his first recommendations as a result of his tour would be a stronger recognition of the work of the financially-troubled UNRWA in the occupied areas.

UNRWA offers medical treatment, education and vocational training to Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, and to displaced Palestinians who were forced to flee to Jordan, Lebanon and Egypt after the 1948 and 1967 Middle East wars.

"UNRWA is so close to the Palestinian refugees, whether in clinics, in schools, or in health centres," he said. "And a strong recognition of the role of UNRWA is something that certainly should be underlined in any report which I may make to the General Assembly," he added.

De Marco described the situation in the occupied territories as a "powderkeg" and said that "it is in the interest of the region and the international community that the problem be resolved through peaceful means before the situation worsens further."

Accompanied by UNRWA Commissioner General Giorgio Giacomelli, de Marco toured the Baqa'a refugee camp near Amman, chartered with local residents and was briefed by UNRWA officials on services offered to the camp residents.

Several representatives of the local population presented their views to de Marco, at a meeting in the camp, stressing their determination to return to their homeland in Palestine.

In reply, de Marco said that a recent consent by the Security



Guido de Marco with street vendors in Baqa'a refugee camp (Photo by Yusef Al 'Allan)

Council that work should be done towards convening an international conference was a good start and "it is hoped that the coming few weeks will witness serious work towards holding that conference."

De Marco also visited the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) office in Amman where he met with heads of all U.N. agencies operating in Jordan and was briefed on their departments' activities and services, especially those extended during the first few weeks of the Gulf crisis and the repatriation arrangements for the thousands of evacuees from the Gulf.

A UNDP statement later said that de Marco briefed his audience on the U.N. role in solving international problems and endeavours during the Gulf crisis and its related issues in addition to the Palestine question.

De Marco is visiting the region under a mandate from U.N. Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar to review the situation of the Palestinian refugees living in the area.

De Marco, who is due to leave for Egypt Monday, was welcomed upon arrival in Amman by Foreign Minister Taher Al Masri, Jordan's U.N. Ambassador Abdullah Salah and other officials.

Badran lauds European efforts to find peaceful solution to crisis

AMMAN (J.T.) — Prime Minister Mudar Badran Saturday expressed Jordan's deep interest in the European nations' efforts to help reach a settlement of the Gulf crisis and particularly mentioned the French initiative and those efforts exerted by the non-aligned countries of which Jordan is a member.

The prime minister also emphasised the need to bolster the domestic front and urged ministers to exert efforts towards improving and raising the standard of services to the public.

Badran was speaking at the first Cabinet session, after the reshuffle, during which he briefed the ministers on the present domestic and external political situation.

The prime minister outlined to the ministers His Majesty King Hussein's current endeavours to reach a peaceful settlement to the Gulf crisis and his talks with European leaders on this matter. He expressed hope that these efforts would result in saving off war in the Gulf region.

In welcoming the new ministers, the prime minister said that the present stage required concerted efforts on the part of all parties and ministries so that the Kingdom could overcome the challenges facing it at the moment.

He stressed that the domestic front was solid, but the looming danger should prompt the government and its various departments to perform at the best of their possibilities and to offer public services to the citizens; he stressed that sufficient study should be given to all sectors with a view to improving and raising the level of services.

Last Tuesday, the prime minister reshuffled the Cabinet by bringing in 10 new members and switching the portfolios of four serving members following the resignation of 10 Cabinet members.

His Majesty King Hussein sent Badran a message on the occasion stressing that the change of ministerial portfolios reflected the vitality of the state as manifested by the democratisation process in Jordan; the King stressed that the change would help deepen and protect the march to democracy.

The King voiced total confidence in Badran's government and wished its members full success in shouldering their responsibilities.

The prime minister also Saturday welcomed an expected meeting in Geneva between the foreign ministers of the United States and Iraq expressing hope that it would have a positive effect on the current peace efforts in the Gulf.

Quoted by Agency France Presse (AFP), the prime minister said that "the Americans and the Iraqis do not want war and this time is most opportune for them to enter into negotiations with a view to reaching peaceful solutions to the various issues of the Middle East."

Referring to King Hussein's meeting with British Prime Minister John Major, the prime minister said that the talks between the two leaders contained a number of positive points in relations to the current endeavours for a peaceful settlement to the Gulf crisis.

Dwelling on the same topic, Information Minister Ibrahim Izzeddine said that he was extremely happy about the coming parity on Wednesday.

In an interview with the World Television Network (WTN) Izzeddine said everyone, including the Europeans, is moving in a direction to avert the possibility of war and to concentrate more on a peaceful settlement.

"So whether we call it negotiations, whether we call it a meeting, they are going to sit down and they have to talk and to talk sense both of them, and to avert the possibility of war," the minister noted.

He said: "Having in mind all these initiatives, I think when they sit down they have to take into consideration what the non-aligned countries are saying, what the Europeans are saying, what the Arabs are saying."

The minister said the issue was not one between two countries since the matter was more complicated.

In reply to a question, the minister said that the meeting in Geneva was a great possibility "and I think one is encouraged by all these initiatives." He said France had given a very open and very strong initiative "so all these things should be taken into consideration during the coming few days."

Jordan, the minister added, is "interested in a peaceful settlement based on international legitimacy and believes in a negotiated settlement based on the recognition that Iraq should not be harmed."

Foreigners start leaving; some against own judgement

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Dozens of Americans, Britons and other Western nationals were leaving Amman Saturday in line with travel advisories from their governments, but several of them said they had no choice but to leave against their own judgement.

Airport sources and travel agencies said flights headed for the U.S. and Europe were overbooked ahead of the Jan. 15 deadline set by the United Nations Security Council for Iraq to leave Kuwait or face war.

The departures, which appeared to have picked up momentum Saturday judging from the number of people thronging the departure lounge of Queen Alia International Airport, were prompted by travel advisories issued by the United States and Britain which have raised scenarios of anti-Western "incidents" in Jordan in the event of war in the Gulf.

"I think it is a scare tactic," said an American student who refused to follow the travel advisory. "If there is a real danger in Jordan, why then Israel is not included in the travel advisory, particularly in light of Iraqi warnings that Tel Aviv would be one of the first targets if war breaks out?" asked the student, insisting that he be not identified by name.

Passengers leaving Saturday appeared to be under instructions not to talk to the press. However, at least two of them said in private that they were working for American companies, whose senior officials had insisted that they leave Jordan.

"If my manager tells me it is not safe for me to stay here and that I should leave, I have no choice but to leave simply because I am an employee of the company," said one.

A 22-year-old student from Britain said she was not taking heed of the travel advisory. "I don't think there is going to be war," she said, preferring to remain anonymous. "Even if there was a war, I don't think Western nationals might come under attack in Jordan," she added.

Many other Britons and several Americans said they did not think the situation in Jordan and fears of anti-Western attacks were as serious as their governments portrayed them to be.

Another American, Tina Abu Jaber, said: "I am happy here and I consider Jordan to be my home."

"I do not see any real danger here to leave the country," added Abu Jaber, of Boston, Massachusetts, who is married to a Jordanian.

U.S. embassy officials, contacted this week, refused to comment on the movement of Americans.

But U.S. embassy spokesman have said they had reason to believe that there could be "anti-American incidents" in Jordan if war broke out between Iraq and the U.S.-led multinational forces assembled in the Gulf.

"With conditions resulting from the Gulf crisis, which have been intensified by the deadline set for Jan. 15 for Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait, we think that anti-American incidents are more likely to happen," said an American spokesman last week.

On Dec. 26, the U.S. State Department issued a travel advisory for Jordan that ordered non-essential embassy personnel and government dependents to leave the country before Jan. 15.

It also advised American citizens to defer travel plans to Jordan and those in the country to "leave as soon as possible."

The State Department said the advisory applied to 80 American citizens, including government dependents and non-essential embassy personnel.

But, according to the Interior Ministry, the number of American citizens in Jordan is around 3,000, including those of Jordanian and other Arab origin. Many Jordanian men are married to American women.

At Amman airport several American families leaving Saturday included children and women.

Sources at Royal Jordanian, the national carrier, said its four weekly flights to New York as well as other flights to Europe were fully booked and some had waiting lists of as many as 30 passengers.

Several European countries have also issued travel advisories, but short of asking their nationals to leave as Washington and London have done.

Diplomatic sources said several Asian countries were gearing up to evacuate their nationals in the event of war breaking out after the deadline.

The Indian Embassy advertised in the local papers last week asking Indian nationals living here to register themselves with the mission. Similar measures have been taken by the embassies of the Philippines, Japan and South Korea.

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Income Tax Department (ITD) last year collected JD 114,179 million, registering an increase of 121.89 per cent over 1989 when the total collection amounted to JD 51,456 million, according to a statement Saturday.

The statement said that although the department had announced in the 1990 fiscal budget that it would collect JD 110 million, it was able to increase the figure to JD 114,179 million, due to the improved collection system and increased collections from various sources.

The announcement attributed the big increase in the collections of a contribution from the Jordan Phosphate Mines Company (JPMC) which paid JD 50 million in income tax on its sales in 1989.

It said that the share holding companies' contribution to the collections was JD 87,222,372, individuals paid JD 18,176,618 and employees JD 8,780,132.

According to the statement, the Income Tax Department expects to collect a total of JD 90 million during 1991 in taxes on income earned during 1989. The Department Director Adel Al Qudat told Radio Jordan Saturday morning that teams from his department have now embarked on distributing forms to various companies and businesses in the Kingdom to be filled by the taxpayers giving details about their income in the past year.

He said that the Income Tax Department offered tax payers incentives in the form of discounts on the amounts they should pay if they settled their dues in the first six months of the year.

Jordan's foreign policy unlikely to change with Cabinet reshuffle

Marwan Al Qasbi
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan's foreign policy is unlikely to undergo a fundamental change with the departure last week of Foreign Minister Marwan Al Qasbi and his replacement with Taher Al Masri, but the move is expected to cultivate a home-grown diplomatic activity more attuned to the thinking of Parliament's Lower House, according to observers and analysts.

Masri had not only been chairman of the House's Foreign Relations Committee for the past 12 months. He has also been an active deputy and a prominent member of one of the main groupings in the chamber, the National Bloc.

While much of the foreign press was busy last week reading a "more pro-Iraq" stand in the Cabinet reshuffle in which Masri took over from Qasbi, Jordanian analysts disagreed with this point of view. "Insofar as Jordan's policy on the Gulf crisis is concerned, there will be no change," said one political observer close to the government. "Jordan's policy has all along been to reach a peaceful solution to the crisis, and based on this I don't think Mr. Masri is less committed to this approach than Mr. Qasbi has been," he added.

Some comments and analysis in the foreign media argued that the change in the Foreign Ministry was significant because "Qasbi had close relations with the Gulf countries and was somewhat 'pro-American'." Jordanians meanwhile saw things differently.

"The new foreign minister has a mandate from the people and from the government, therefore the Parliament will perceive him in a different light," said one political observer right after the Cabinet reshuffle was announced last Tuesday.

While there was unanimous agreement by observers and political analysts that the change in the Cabinet post marked no significant change in Jordan's foreign policy, almost all agreed that the accusation by some House members that Qasbi was too "pro-American" had more to do with his image among those deputies than anything else.

During his last days in office "Qasbi made some of the strongest anti-American statements made by a Jordanian official," noted one observer, who did not want to be identified.

The observer was referring

to statements Qasbi made late last month in which he commented on Security Council resolution 661.

"While it is true that Qasbi's position (on the resolution) largely reflected the government's stand, it did not make him seem 'pro-American' in any way," the observer said.

A political analyst said he believed that if there was any change it would be in the foreign minister's perceived image on the domestic front and not on the foreign front.

Qasbi's, "is how one member of the Lower House put it. Observers believe that Masri also has a special role to play in Jordanian-Palestinian relations. "Masri has a lot of support from centrist Palestinians and Jordanians and his Palestinian background makes him a key player in this arena," said one political analyst. Jordan-PLO relations have witnessed steady improvement since Jordan held its first parliamentary elections in 22 years in November 1988.

NEWS ANALYSIS

Masri is a former minister of state for the occupied territories and had also served as foreign minister in Zeid Rifai's government between 1985 and 1988. He served as Jordan's ambassador to Spain, France and the United Kingdom before 1984 when he was appointed foreign minister in the Ahmad Obaidat government for the first time.

Observers say Masri is expected to have a better working relationship with the Lower House.

"Because he knows the deputies well, his relationship with the House as foreign minister will be smoother than

'Terra media'

(Continued from page 1)

tion 661. "In a separate report submitted in October 1990 by M. Jean Ripert to the United Nations secretary-general, it is stated that 'Jordan is not the target of the embargo but it may be its greatest victim'."

"A trans-national assessment is needed because Jordan evidently cannot control variables outside its borders. The situation is further complicated by the fact that Palestinians, both within the occupied territories and outside, do not have a focal point to assess their case. Tens of thousands of Palestinian returnees from the Gulf, holding non-Jordanian Arab travel documents, have literally landed at our doorstep after being denied access by the country that issued their travel documents in the first place.

"Organic links exist between Palestinians in the territories and the Gulf. But their case is in danger of going by default, thus refuelling extremism. The plight of Jordanian and Palestinian expatriates in Kuwait has been aptly described by the ESCWA report as follows: 'The misery of these expatriates has not been limited to the loss of jobs... it also has extended to the loss of savings, end-of-service remunerations, and assets... They can hardly manage to have an income source in a country with already a high unemployment rate. Nor do they dispose of any savings from which they can pay for the cost of living.'"

In trying to pre-empt the impact "of war, major regional constraints need to be appraised. Whether in terms of socio-economic stability, environment or ecology, we aim, with the help of this small group, to internationalise the message now before it is too late."

Shortages of milk, medicine said to be growing in Iraq

AMMAN (J.T.) — The shortage of children's milk and medicine for the sick in Iraq has now reached serious proportions causing the death of many people, especially those who suffer from illnesses for which drugs can not be produced by Iraqi pharmaceutical industries, according to the President of the Iraqi Pharmacists Association Saadi Khaled Sadeddin.

"Medicines in need in Iraq are those required to cure children, those taken by cardiac patients and those who suffer from blood pressure among others," Sadeddin said in a press conference attended by the Jordanian counterpart Tayseer Al Himsi.

The current embargo on Iraq, depriving its children of basic food and medicine, is not in harmony with the United Nations Charter and international principles, and the time has come to end the embargo with the help of peace-loving nations and world organisations," said Sadeddin.

"We call on all Arabs and Muslims and all humanitarian organisations in the world to end the embargo on Iraq and provide the Iraqi children and the sick people there with milk and medicine," he appealed.

The process of providing these essential and basic materials he added, can help Iraq withstand the other pressures on its people.

Sadeddin was expected to meet with owners of Jordanian pharmaceutical industries and pharmacists before returning to Baghdad.

Sadeddin said that his association had been in contact with the Jordanian Pharmacists Association (JPA) and seeking help to alleviate the suffering of the Iraqi people.

Referring to the Ibn Khaldoun peace ship carrying medicine and food for the Iraqi children, which was seized by the American warships off the coast of Oman last month, Sadeddin said the ship had been stopped although it was known that it was carrying humanitarian assistance to the Iraqi people.

The ship was reported to have arrived in Oman but nothing was learnt about the estimated 240 passengers on board.

Groups of Jordanian women had staged two protests in Amman in the past two weeks and presented protest notes to the United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) offices in Amman demanding the release of the ship.

Addressing the press conference, Tayseer Al Himsi said that the JPA would assist the Iraqi people to confront aggression and overcome the effects of the embargo.

News agencies' reports from Tunis said that another peace ship called "Balqia" was on its way to the Iraqi port of Basra carrying medicine. The cargo is a gift from the people of Arab countries in North Africa.

Aida Najjar, spokeswoman for the Ibn Khaldoun peace ship said her group on the peace ship had no connection with the Balqia peace ship, though the two ships serve the same goal.

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

Masaadeh, Khalaf hold talks

AMMAN (Petra) — Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Salem Masaadeh received in his office Saturday the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Executive Committee member and member of the PLO Fatah movement Salah Khalaf who is currently on a visit to Jordan. Masaadeh and Khalaf reviewed relations between Jordan and the PLO and ways to enhance cooperation and coordination between them for the benefit of the Jordanian and the Palestinian peoples and the Arab Nation as a whole at this serious stage through which the Arab Nation is passing.

Taher, Canadian envoy hold talks

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Taher Al Taher received in his office Saturday the Canadian Ambassador to Jordan Michael Bell and discussed with him means to promote cooperation between Jordan and Canada in the field of energy and mineral resources. The meeting was attended by the director general of the Natural Resources Authority (NRA) and the commercial attaché at the Canadian Embassy in Amman.

Kellani meets ministry's directors

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Ibrahim Zeid Al Kellani met Saturday with the directors of the ministry's various departments and reviewed with them issues related to the process of work at the ministry. Kellani urged the directors to work in the spirit of team to achieve the ministry's objectives pointing out to the great responsibilities the ministry is shouldering and its active role in directing the society towards the higher ideals of the Islamic faith.

Inter-faith delegation leaves for Rome

AMMAN (J.T.) — A Christian Muslim delegation comprising 26 personalities from Jordan Saturday left for Rome on a six-day visit during which they will be received in audience by His Holiness Pope John Paul II and will hold meetings with official and public organisations in Italy to present Jordan's views concerning the Gulf crisis and the Palestine question.

The group whose members include doctors, lawyers, Muslim and Christian leaders, journalists and Parliament members is expected to brief the Italian public on Israel's violations of human rights, its desecration of Christian and Islamic holy shrines and its drive to Judaise the holy city of Jerusalem by terrorism, violence and the use of force, according to a spokesman for the group.

The delegation led by member of the Upper House of Parliament Ali Abu Nowar, will present memoranda to heads of political parties, parliament members and the media in addition to a detailed memorandum to the Pope concerning Jordan's position with regard to the major issues of the region, the conditions of the Christian and Islamic holy places under Israeli occupation and Israel's intransigent position.

According to the spokesman, the memoranda stress the fact that the Middle East and the Gulf issues are closely linked and that there can be no peace unless both of them are settled in accordance with U.N. resolutions.

He said that the memoranda insist that the implementation of the international legitimacy should take place in both cases on equal footing so that peace and justice can be established.

He said that the memoranda call on the European countries to play a stronger and more effective role towards settling the Middle East issue and ending the Gulf crisis without resorting to any form of blackmail, intimidation or the threat of the use of force.

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Sunday's Economic Pulse

Why did we prevail... economically

THE Gulf crisis which erupted on Aug. 2, 1990 caused a major set-back to the Jordanian economic adjustment programme. The programme was working beautifully before the eruption of the crisis. Until then all the fundamentals of the economy showed substantial improvements except for the volume of new investments which remained slow, and the level of unemployment which remained at above 16 per cent.

The most prominent achievements were made in the areas of raising exports, curbing imports, stabilising exchange rate, reducing inflation rate, re-building foreign exchange reserve and better budget performance. In each of these areas the actual performance was much better than the targets set forth in the IMF recommended programme. The International Monetary Fund was enthusiastic about the results. They finally have a successful case to show the sceptical developing countries that much can be done, once they embark on a realistic programme, supported by a national will.

The Gulf crisis caused losses in all major sources of foreign exchange. Arab aid estimated at \$500 million a year all but

disappeared completely. Expatriates remittances were slashed by one third, a net loss of \$200 million and exports markets in Iraq, Kuwait, and the Gulf states were suspended until further notice, a loss of around \$300 million a year.

Local economic activity was also hit hard, especially tourism, transit, industry and agriculture.

There must be some factors that helped Jordan to stand up to all these economic and financial damages. Among these we can mention concessionary Iraqi oil, foreign grants and soft loans, suspension of debt service and internal adaptation to the new circumstances, and loss minimisation techniques.

Thanks to the nervous Saudi decision to cut off the tapline, the Iraqi oil is currently flowing to Jordan partially free of charge and partially at \$16 per barrel. Iraq has thus saved Jordan around \$400 million a year. Even the billed part of the crude oil is not paid in cash, it cost Jordan a book entry against past Iraqi debt.

Foreign grants from Germany, Holland and Taiwan, and soft loans from Japan, France, Italy, Sweden, Korea, Canada and European Community (EC) are not as high as expected but they

will make up for the lost Arab aid and secure the continued flow of essential foreign imports.

The partial suspension of foreign debt service saved Jordan hundreds of millions of dollars which were supposed to be paid according to the arrangement previously agreed upon with the Paris Club and London Club. It is true that these commitments were only rolled over to the future, but the step was crucial to the cash flow of the country as reflected in the balance of payments. Perhaps more important is that the government and the private sector did their homework well. They adopted themselves and their economic and financial behaviour to the new difficult circumstances. Thus the losses were minimised through applying alternatives and seeking new opportunities.

There is no doubt that Jordan was hit economically, but, thanks to the Iraqi oil, the foreign assistance, the debt service suspension and the internal policy adjustments, Jordan prevailed, and proved itself as a viable entity capable of survival until the crisis goes away, and with it the losses and damages.

Jordanian economy may be down, but it definitely is not out.

Giving talks a chance

THE IMPENDING Baker-Aziz talks in Geneva next Wednesday have generated renewed optimism that a breakthrough over the Gulf standoff could be in the offing. At the same time there is a growing flurry of diplomatic activity in many capitals, notably in the European Community countries, which offer to come to the rescue of the fledgling peace initiative should it become deadlocked.

But, even according to the most optimistic scenarios, there is no way that Iraq can meet the January 15 deadline set by the U.N. Security Council in its resolution 678. The international community must therefore be prepared for the worst yet hope for the best. The intertwined issues that the Gulf crisis has spawned cannot all be addressed in one meeting between U.S. Secretary of State James Baker and his Iraqi counterpart Tariq Aziz. Even with the best intentions, there is little time left to deal with the multiplicity of Gulf-related issues that require urgent and careful attention and handling before a breakthrough can be realised. Over and above the security guarantees to Iraq in the event of it withdrawing from Kuwait territory, there are a host of matters that also need resolutions, such as the sanctions that are being imposed on Iraq. Washington now suggests that sanctions cannot be lifted even if Baghdad implements the Security Council resolutions on Kuwait unless and until Iraq disarms itself and until Israel once again regains the confidence that it is the sole regional power in the Middle East.

Under the circumstances, the council should be reconvened as the U.N. secretary general, Javier Peres de Cuellar, has proposed recently to reflect on how to proceed next. Even if the Baker-Aziz talks collapse and the Aziz-EC negotiations also fail, the council members need to assemble once again to decide on the following course of action. This is in essence what the U.N. secretary-general suggested Friday in New York. Security Council resolution 678 allowing for the use of force against Iraq in the event it refuses to withdraw from Kuwait is not a self-executing resolution. It would require further action by the council members to put it into effect. As a matter of fact, such a meeting by the council must be held in the shortest possible time in order to give the major players in the crisis more breathing space to articulate a sensible solution to the explosive situation in the region. Meanwhile an embargo on bellicose statements from both sides should be strongly considered. As long as the antagonists continue to issue one threat after the other on the eve of the Geneva talks, there would be persistent fear that the promising dialogue could be doomed even before it begins. The better alternative is to work on building a more constructive atmosphere in order not to prejudice the outcome of the Iraqi-U.S. talks or the EC-Iraqi negotiations afterwards. All parties connected with the Gulf crisis should give these talks the benefit of the doubt and should work to make them succeed since all have agreed to conduct them in the first place.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RA'I daily Saturday comments on a proposal by the Spanish foreign minister for the European Community (EC) to start a dialogue with Baghdad and Washington for the sake of staving off the danger of war in the Gulf. This is a brave proposal coming from an EC member nation to the EC of the community, and it is a clear indication that the Europeans are inclined to play a role totally independent from the United States with a view to arriving at peace on the one hand and to safeguard European interests in the Middle East and the Gulf on the other, said the paper. Such dialogue, should it take place, will be held in a very constructive atmosphere free of all intimidation and threats that characterise Washington's attitude at present, the paper continued. It said that the proposed dialogue will certainly serve as an advanced step towards the attainment of peace based on justice; and therefore Baghdad will certainly welcome such move though it is uncertain that the proposal would be acceptable to Washington which considers itself the policeman of the world. Spain's move is a welcome development since this dialogue would be based on the principle of dealing with various world issues on equal footing including the Gulf crisis and the Palestine question, the paper noted. The paper urged the European Community to adopt Spain's idea because it said it is a real chance for breaking the current deadlock in the search for settlements to all the region's issues.

A columnist in Al Ra'i daily discusses the prospects of forming a teachers union in Jordan to serve, like all other unions and associations, those men and women who are involved in the teaching profession and to protect their social and economic gains. Bader Abdul Haq notes that teachers have been seeking to set up a union or association since the early 1960s, but were hampered by a number of obstacles, mainly the government's refusal to allow the teachers to group for fear of their political activities. The writer says that parliament members and the minister of education have now given the green light to the teachers to set up their own union, benefiting from the present climate of democracy which is opening the door wide for all political and non-political activities in the Kingdom. Abdul Haq says now that the opportunity has presented itself to the teachers, they are in disarray and disagreement over the leadership, and each group of teachers wants to have its own ideology and its own leader and unable to reach consensus on the minimal level. He says that the ball is now in the teachers' court, and it is incumbent on the teachers to take the first step towards the creation of their union which would protect their interests, and it is imperative that they reach a common denominator that would help them take the initial step to achieve their objective.

Exiled Kuwaiti government puts frozen assets to work

By Sam Burks

WASHINGTON — Five months after Iraqi troops occupied Kuwait, the Kuwaiti government-in-exile has succeeded in regaining full control over nearly all of its global financial empire valued at more than \$120,000 million.

Operating from a base almost 900 miles from Kuwait, in the Rif mountains of Saudi Arabia, Kuwaiti Finance Minister Ali Khalifa Al Sabah sends out daily telex instructions to the London-based Kuwaiti Investment Office and Kuwait Petroleum company on how these international assets are to be managed.

According to DRI McGraw Hill, an internationally known U.S. economic forecasting firm, Kuwait's foreign assets totaled about \$124,000 million in 1989, some \$24,000 million of which were in bank deposits, foreign currencies and gold bullion. More than 40 per cent of the total is believed to be invested in North America, 35 per cent in Europe and the rest in Japan, southeast Asia and Australia.

Prior to Iraq's Aug. 2 invasion, Kuwait earned an estimated \$12,000 to \$16,000 million a year from its foreign investments—an amount that exceeded its annual oil revenues. At present, it receives another 950 million dollars a year from oil production in the so-called neutral zone it shares with Saudi Arabia, as well as undetermined amounts from its four European refineries and its 6,500 European service stations. With oil from Kuwait and Iraq embargoed, those four refineries process about 185,000 barrels per day of Saudi oil.

Immediately following the Iraqi invasion, the United

States and a number of other industrial nations issued orders effectively blocking or "freezing" all Kuwaiti and Iraqi government-owned assets within their jurisdictions. Privately owned Kuwaiti and Iraqi assets were not affected in most cases.

The purpose of the freeze was to deprive Iraq of any economic or financial benefits—including revenues from the sale of both Iraqi and Kuwaiti oil—that might result from its illegal invasion and occupation of Kuwait, and to preserve and protect the assets of the legitimate Kuwaiti government for eventual use by their rightful owners. But the freeze also made it almost impossible for the Kuwaiti government-in-exile to manage its far-flung business operations.

According to Kuwaiti officials, the biggest problems they faced initially were proving ownership of their government's assets—since many records were still in Iraqi-occupied Kuwait—and gaining approval from the various governments involved to transfer funds across international borders. Formal approval was at first required for each transaction, but that no longer is necessary in most instances.

As the Kuwaiti government-in-exile progressively established clear title to its frozen assets, more and more latitude was granted by host governments. Six weeks after the Iraqi invasion, Kuwaiti officials reported that their international business operations were almost back to normal, thanks in large measure to exemptions granted by the

Bank of England, the U.S. Federal Reserve and other central banks.

Subsequently, Kuwaiti officials agreed to provide some \$5,000 million to help reimburse Turkey and other frontline states in the Middle East for losses incurred from their participation in the United Nations trade embargo against Iraq and to pay part of the cost of maintaining U.S. and other coalition troops in Saudi Arabia.

'The future of Iraq's frozen assets remains unclear at this time. Several proposals have been introduced in the U.S. Congress calling for seizure of Iraqi assets—or at least the interest earned by these assets—to pay financial claims brought by U.S. citizens and to help defray the cost of maintaining U.S. troops in Saudi Arabia. But none of these proposals has received the Bush administration's formal support and consequently they have not moved forward.'

Richard Newcomb, director of the Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control, told a congressional hearing Nov. 27 that his agency had quickly recognised the need to ease restrictions on Kuwaiti government assets in the United States, since complete immobilisation of these assets for a prolonged period would have resulted in "an unconscionable diminution of their value and an unnecessary disruption in a number of markets."

In contrast, Iraqi assets frozen by the United States and other nations continue to be highly restricted. The nature and exact amount of Iraqi assets frozen in major world financial centres is unknown

at this time, but reliable estimates have placed the total at about \$4,000 million. Iraqi assets in the United States—primarily bank accounts and payments derived from pre-invasion oil contracts—are believed to total about \$1,000 million. As with all investments, however, the dollar value of these assets tends to fluctuate with changes in the marketplace.

Under U.S. law, all frozen assets must be placed in in-

terest-bearing accounts, defined as "accounts in a U.S. financial institution earning interest at rates that are commercially reasonable for the amount of funds in the account." These accounts are monitored closely by the Treasury Department to safeguard them against confiscation or misuse by financial institutions or individuals.

Institution holding frozen assets are required to file a monthly report to the Treasury Department that includes a summary of the average balance in the account, along with any debits and credits made during the reporting period.

Any unauthorised transfers of frozen property "are

deemed to be null and void and do not pass good title," Newcomb said. In addition, persons or institutions that violate the Treasury regulations are subject to stiff fines and prison sentences.

Newcomb said all major world financial centres have cooperated in effectively reducing Iraqi financial flows "to a mere trickle of their pre-August levels." He added that his office is planning to make a formal survey of Iraqi government assets in the United States, together with U.S. financial claims against Iraq. At least one U.S. engineering firm—the Consarc Corporation of Rancocas, New Jersey—has already brought suit against the Iraqi government, seeking 62 million dollars in actual and punitive damages resulting from default on an 11-million-dollar contract to supply Iraq with industrial furnaces.

The Iraqi government cannot draw on its frozen funds in the United States. But the Treasury Department does allow payments from certain accounts owned by Iraq to cover costs incurred in the normal operation of its embassy and consular offices in the United States.

The future of Iraq's frozen assets remains unclear at this time. Several proposals have been introduced in the U.S. Congress calling for seizure of Iraqi assets—or at least the interest earned by these assets—to pay financial claims brought by U.S. citizens and to help defray the cost of maintaining U.S. troops in Saudi Arabia. But none of these proposals has received the Bush administration's formal support and consequently they have not moved forward.

On Oct. 29, the United Nations Security Council over-whelmingly approved a resolution declaring Iraq responsible for all damage and personal injuries resulting from its occupation of Kuwait and asking member nations to begin preparing claims for possible future financial compensation.

There are many international precedents for awarding non-war claims. Most recently, in 1981 following Iran's release of U.S. hostages, the United States set aside \$1,000 million in frozen Iranian funds to establish a security account in The Hague from which awards by an Iran-U.S. Claims Tribunal were paid.

Kuwaiti Finance Minister Ali Khalifa says that his government expects a lot of claims to be filed against Iraq. "It's incredible to see what the Iraqis are doing these days," he said in a recent interview with Business Week, a U.S. news magazine. "Even traffic lights (in occupied Kuwait) have been taken from the streets. Of course we cannot give up on all the claims, even if Saddam is overthrown."

According to the International Monetary Fund, Iraq is believed to have confiscated about \$2,000 million of Kuwaiti domestic assets since the invasion. These include some \$800 million in foreign reserves, \$32 million in commercial bank assets.

International analysts say Iraq owes at least \$50,000 million, in foreign debt from its eight-year war with Iran. In fact, the desire to seize Kuwaiti financial wealth was believed to be a major reason behind the Iraqi invasion—(USIA).

Bush backers insist he means what he says on Gulf

By Gene Gibbons
Reuters

WASHINGTON — It seems to be George Bush's burden that people question his mettle and wonder, for example, if a genial blueblood who says things like "gosh" and "golly" is really tough to go to war against Iraq.

The answer, in the view of people who know Bush or have worked with him during his 25 years of public life, is "yes". "The president's credibility on this is very strong," said Senator Richard Lugar, a moderate Republican foreign policy expert and one of congress's most respected voices.

"He...has indicated that if Saddam Hussein does not withdraw the United Nations would react militarily, and I think he's still on that course," said Lugar, who has had cordial relations with the president but is not considered among his inner-

circle. "The question is not whether we're going to have a war, but when," a grim-faced Senator Patrick Leahy, a Vermont Democrat, said Thursday upon emerging from talks with the president.

Robert Blake, a colleague from Bush's days as a Texas oilman, predicted he will order military action fairly quickly if Baghdad ignores the Jan. 15 U.N. deadline for withdrawing from Kuwait.

"When he gets his mind set to do something, that's what he does," Blake said in a telephone interview from Lubbock, Texas. "I think when he says he wants Iraq out of Kuwait, he means it and that he'll do what it takes to get them out."

Most in Bush's personal circle respect his distaste for insider comment and decline to discuss this on the record. But those contacted by Reuters were

unanimous in saying they had no doubt he will send in the troops if he feels he must.

Still, the impression of nice-guy softness persists even though Bush flew 58 combat missions in World War II, was shot down in the Pacific and won the distinguished Flying Cross for valor.

When he told some congressmen recently that Saddam would "get his ass kicked" if he forced war, the remark raised more eyebrows than goosebumps.

Similarly, speculation remains rife that Washington might accept some kind of compromise peace deal with Baghdad even though Bush, in suggesting that Secretary of State James Baker meet his Iraqi counterpart in Switzerland next week, explicitly ruled out negotiation, compromise or "rewards for aggression."

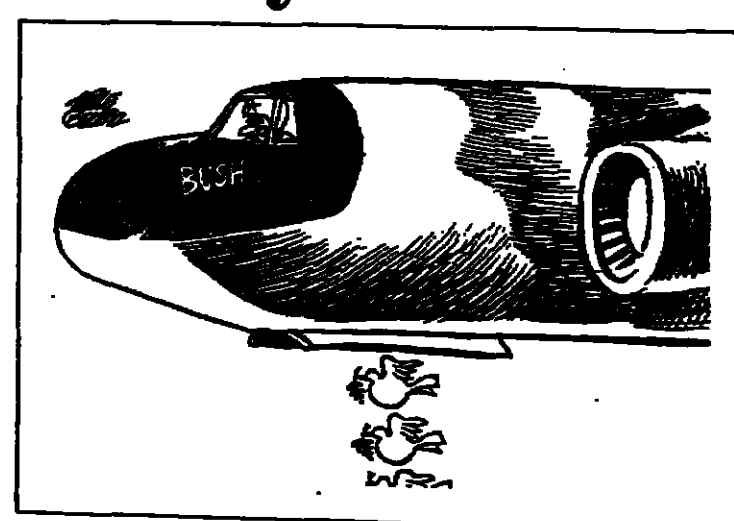
In arguing that people are underestimating the president's resolve, his friends point to a life replete with examples of steady-

ness in adversity: World War II carrier pilot — the youngest in U.S. navy history, at age 19 — shot down in combat against the Japanese; father of a daughter who died of leukaemia two months before her fourth birthday; self-made millionaire in the rough-and-tumble Texas oil business.

Perhaps more to the point and certainly vivid in public memory is his record to date in the oval office.

He used paratroops and power to overthrow Panamanian strongman Manuel Noriega little more than a year ago, provided air cover to help Philippines President Corason Aquino survive a coup in late 1989 and sent troops to El Salvador in an effort to rescue some Americans during another 1989 crisis.

Bush is the last major world leader who fought in World War II and he clearly regards that as a formative experience in dealing



with crises now, including the one in the Gulf.

"This is no exercise," he told a gathering of U.S. marines and British "Desert Rat" tank troops during a Thanksgiving visit in November to front lines in Saudi

Arabia. "This is a real-world situation and we're not walking away until our mission is done and the invader is out of Kuwait — and that may well be where you come in."

Shipping to Aqaba and international schizophrenia

By Mohammad Asfour

The writer is chairman of Amman Chamber of Commerce. He contributed this article to the Jordan Times.

STRANGE are the actions and stranger is the behaviour of the world's most democratic country and supporter of international legitimacy. A few weeks ago we talked to responsible Americans at their embassy in Amman, about the actions of the self-appointed American traffic policemen at the entrance of the Gulf of Aqaba, and what a comfort it was knowing that the interception of commercial ships coming into the Gulf of Aqaba had decreased.

We had thought that the

whole matter was the result of quesswork and imagination on the part of the Americans, and we thought further that they had finally been convinced of the illegality and illegitimacy of intercepting commercial ships destined for Aqaba. Moreover, we had thought that they had finally been convinced of the illegitimacy of searching these ships or forcibly redirecting their course, their excuse being that they could not allow shipping to a businessman whose name they

Now, once again, we are hearing of interceptions and searches, and once again, the American officer's "black list" has become the definitive reason for commercially excommunicating a businessman and for sending his livelihood into purgatory. The lucky ones whose names do not appear on the list are granted "declaration of indulgence" and only their goods freely enter the Gulf of Aqaba.

Needless to say, interception and search of ships is not only an act of aggression, but also totally illegal. We are not attempting to prove the illegality of the American "policeman's" actions be-

cause it does not need proof. What we are trying to assert, is that these practices are not becoming of a nation calling itself "Great," and the twentieth century civilisation can only shun these practices.

A country that adopts double standards as the norm for its outlook and dealing with international issues cannot be fit to be poised on the throne of civilisation or to be considered a world leader. Humanity has throughout the ages fought and struggled to raise man to a proper civilised level and what we have attained by way of high levels of thought, philosophy, economics and social affairs are clear manifestations

of the results of this struggle. At a time when we had thought that we attained the desired level of man's humanity worldwide, we are shocked to see that the "custodian of human rights, liberty freedom and independence" is herself the root cause of economic, social and political turmoil and imbalance in the world today.

Therefore, interception and search of a cargo ship is but a trivial matter when ordered by the custodian of international law and international legitimacy. This is schizophrenia, American style, which civilisation should shun, as this behaviour is totally unacceptable today and is a clear violation of human rights, civil liberties and freedom.

We appeal once again to American policy makers to order a stop to the chase, interception and search of cargo ships destined for the Gulf of Aqaba. But, if this policy comes by way of punishment for a stand which we took, we can only say that Jordan and Jordanians stand fast behind the Hashemite leadership, confident that the only possible solution for the Gulf crisis is an Arab solution. It is the only possible peaceful and mutual way of solving Arab-Arab problems. Our stand is simply not negotiable.

Fund

(Continued from page 1)

build-up in the Gulf to counter Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, very little of such sentiments is visible when it comes to considering the humanitarian issues related to the Gulf crisis and possible consequences of a military conflict.

The round-table meeting called for an emergency fund to help Jordan, the Crown Prince told a press conference, because "while there are existing mechanisms, a mandate and the political will do not exist... to secure the necessary support for funding."

"That is clear by the promises that have simply not held," the Crown Prince said.

If war were to break out in the Gulf in the near future and no international aid was forthcoming to Jordan, the Kingdom would "find it very difficult to cope" with the situation, he said.

"Starting within the next 10 days we may be faced with the influx of two million evacuees," the Crown Prince said referring to the Jan. 15 deadline set by the U.N. Security Council for Iraq to relinquish Kuwait or face war.

"That represents a nightmare scenario," added the Crown Prince, who chaired the round-table conference attended by 48 businessmen and senior representatives of international organizations, experts and specialists.

The participants, who included officials from the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and various United Nations agencies, endorsed the Jordanian position that the Kingdom stood in need of urgent funds to deal with the impact of the Gulf crisis, the Crown Prince reported.

The Crown Prince also welcomed the participation in the conference of both Egypt and Turkey, two "frontline" states in the Gulf stand-off. While Turkey borders Iraq, Egypt has contributed forces to the anti-Iraq alliance led by the United States.

Erci, the former Turkish premier, referred to the expenses Jordan had incurred in helping the transit of about 800,000 evacuees from Kuwait and Iraq until December, and deplored the shortfall in international reimbursement to the Kingdom.

"This shortfall is especially discouraging in light of the \$30,000 per second that is being spent on the current military build-up," Erci said in a statement he read out at the press conference.

The Crown Prince stressed that "windfall profits have been clearly profits in oil prices and profits in the purchase of weapons," and deplored that "people" were not given the due consideration.

Both the Crown Prince and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Director-General James P. Grant, who addressed the conference, stressed the deteriorating health and social conditions of men, women and children as a result of the exigencies and economic problems brought about by the Gulf crisis.

The Gulf crisis has made a "terrible impact on the children of Jordan" and a "rescue mechanism is absolutely necessary" to address the situation, Reid told the press conference.

He said that in many areas in Jordan health, nutrition and educational conditions were nearing sub-standard conditions and that for many if not most families it was becoming impossible to make ends meet.

The economic and social effect that the Gulf crisis has had on the West Bank and Gaza Strip is also very serious. "The gross national product of the West Bank and Gaza has dropped an additional 1.5 per cent since the Gulf crisis began," said Peter Gubser, president of the American Near East Refugee Aid (ANERA).

He said that an estimated 15,000 to 20,000 Palestinians had returned to the occupied territories as a direct result of the crisis and that most of them would be out of work because of the ever increasing economic difficulties in the territories.

"Because of a lack of funding, many health services, hospitals and charitable organizations would not be able to function properly in the West Bank and Gaza," Gubser added.

The Crown Prince, recalling that \$1 billion had been raised within three months as humanitarian aid for Afghanistan, asked: "Where is the international conscience which works so selectively?"

The round-table's final communiqué expressed "concern that while the U.N. Charter clearly envisages that effective remedies should be provided to countries that suffered because of their compliance with U.N. sanctions, such remedies have not been made available to Jordan."

Jordan's economy has been hard hit by the Gulf crisis. The Kingdom lost over \$1.1 billion during 1990 and the 1991 losses are estimated at about \$2.5 billion. The losses have come in the form of trade with Iraq and Kuwait, higher oil prices, Arab financial assistance and expatriate remittances as well as revenues generated from Jordanian territory being used as a main channel for Iraqi imports.

Jordan has applied for compensation under Article 50 of the U.N. Charter which provides for special assistance for countries hit by Security Council resolutions. But the Kingdom has received only a trickle of assistance.

Among the participants of the round-table conference were Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, the U.N. secretary-general's special representative for assistance to countries hit by the economic crisis, and former American Assistant Secretary of State Richard Murphy.

U.N. General Assembly President Guido de Marco, who is currently on a visit to Jordan, attended part of the meetings.

Ramadan

(Continued from page 1)

saying by IRNA. The agency said Shafah made his comments while addressing a news conference in New Delhi during a four-day official visit to India.

Friday Baghdad announced that it had agreed to talks with U.S. Secretary of State James Baker in Geneva Jan. 9. Shafah also repeated the Iraqi stand that it would not withdraw from Kuwait, but that it was ready for "dialogue without preconditions" on all Mideast issues.

Former Israeli defence minister Yitzhak Rabin said Saturday Israel must resist Iraqi attempts to link an end to the Gulf crisis with a solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

"We face two dangers, the military... and second the political one — linkage between the solution of the crisis in the Gulf to the Arab-Israeli conflict. We have to oppose it," Rabin said in a radio interview broadcast Saturday.

Bush

(Continued from page 1)

"He got zero so we don't offer anything in advance unless we see the other side is genuinely interested," Anbari added.

Commenting on the secretary-general's possible mediation role, one Western ambassador close to the Gulf crisis said, "I don't think he is going to pull a rabbit out of the hat" but added that his role might be even more crucial once the Gulf crisis is settled one way or another.

The president said in his radio message Baker's mission was "one more step" before committing U.S. troops to battle, but he added that holding off has its costs.

"We risk paying a higher price in the most precious currency of all — human life — if we give Saddam more time to prepare for war," he said.

By Mariam M. Shahin
Jordan Times staff Reporter

PARIS — While international attention continues to be focused on events in the Gulf, a new "crisis" involving both Arab and occidental interests has come to the forefront at the Institute du Monde Arab (IMA) in Paris.

Amid what appears to be a financial crisis, 37 of the institute's 185 employees were fired in early December because of what Edgard Pisani, IMA president, said was "the Arabs' failure to come up with their 40 per cent of the annual budget since 1987."

A general strike called for by union members at the IMA to have the fired employees reinstated followed immediately. The strike effective since Dec. 9, has brought to the surface old grievances and the strikers say that Pisani is using the Gulf crisis as an excuse to further consolidate his presidential powers.

Pisani has been the president since 1987 when the institute first opened its doors to the public. An Arab institute aimed at furthering intellectual life of the Arab World, the IMA was originally a French — Arab project in which the French government contributed 50 per cent of the costs and the members of the Arab League contributed the other 50 per cent.

Since several Arab League countries, including Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, continually failed to make their promised contributions, according to members of Pisani's office, the French government decided to reduce the financial burden on the Arab countries by increasing its financial share to 60 per cent of the IMA annual budget.

Pisani has almost absolute decision making powers over the institute's affairs as stipulated in its basic charter, and employees and Arab diplomats in Paris say that one of the reasons several Arab countries never paid their share of the budget was precisely because from the beginning they had no say over the institute's agenda.

The employees on strike say that Pisani had gone "too far" with his decisions in early December and are now lobbying Arab embassies to stop what they feel is the "disintegration" of the institute.

Calling the closure of the institutes' documentation centre at the beginning of December, an attempt to "marginalise" the research and academic part of the institute strikes say the real crisis is not based on finances but on politics.

Both the firing of the employees and the closure of the documentation section, the life line of the institutes academic/research section, were the latest in a series of moves IMA employees say were aimed at undermining the "intellectual" side of the institute and reducing it to an art gallery sponsored by French, Arab and international commercial interests.

"One of reasons that we consider the academic independence of this institute so important is because it could not exist anywhere in the Arab World at this time," said IMA documentationist and union official Safi Khatib.

"We would be exposed to national or regional political pressures in a part of the world where democracy seems a dream in the distant future," he added. "If we can't be united in the Arab world then let us be united here and let us record, document and discuss our future," he said.

IMA staff believe that commercialising the institute, as they claim Pisani wants to do, would totally jeopardise the little independence they have.

"If we have to choose between commercial interests setting our agenda and the French and Arab governments setting our agenda, we chose the latter," said a department head at the IMA.

While all employees, mostly academicians and Arabists, agree that having an agenda set by governments is not what they want either, they feel that now they must choose between the better of two evils.

Now Arab diplomats in Paris have witnessed a new round of talks with French government officials and IMA staff in an effort to solve the problems and end the strike.

The reason why so many Arab governments have failed to pay their dues is because the law that governs the IMA does not allow for the Arab side of this 60-40 per cent partnership to have any say-so what-so-ever," Awad Khalidi, Jordan's ambassador to Paris told the Jordan Times in an interview.

Arab sources say that the Arab diplomats were frustrated by Pisani's absolutist decision-making powers.

"But the IMA is like the ambassador of the whole Arab World in Paris and thus not having a 'real' Arab decision-maker on the IMA's central council is not exactly correct," Khalidi says.

The issue of the IMA has come to the attention of the Quai d'Orsay where insiders say French government officials are taking the matter seriously.

"The matter must be resolved quickly," is all a spokes-

man would say when asked what the French government was planning to do.

While the French government officials, Arab diplomats and union leaders hold meetings to "solve the crisis" IMA employees say the whole structure of IMA has to be reconsidered.

"This is a cultural institute, yet we, the IMA are not directly answerable to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs," said Nicola, an employee at the IMA. "Our president is a political employee who is changed whenever parliamentary changes are made," said another employee on strike.

"How can we be cultural or consistent with such people running the institute?" he asked.

"Our point is the following," said a senior academic at the IMA, "we are on strike because we don't see why our colleagues should be fired, we don't our institute to be commercialised by the president. Pisani nor do we want the institute to become the slave for the temporary interest of certain Arab governments, dictators or otherwise."

The institute's president Pisani, served in a post under Charles de Gaulle and is currently adviser to President Mitterand.

His advocates say he is staunchly pro-Arab and his personal contacts in the Arab World officials here say equal

that of a head of state.

"In the spring he visited all countries in the Arab World and was met mostly by heads of state who promised to pay their shares which now amount to \$60 million," Raja Farhat, Pisani's adviser for communications told the Jordan Times.

According to Farhat, the smaller and poorer Arab countries such as Djibouti, Mauritania, Yemen and Tunisia have consistently paid their bills. "But its rich ones, with the exception of Kuwait, have not paid a penny for years," Farhat said.

Those close to Pisani say that the IMA president does not intend to hold his breath and wait for the Arab countries to "pay the bills."

In order to meet his estimated \$17 million yearly costs, of which the French government pays \$12 million, Pisani intends to commercialise the institute by possibly leasing office space to companies and/or leasing companies such as Coca Cola and Tompison to sponsor certain exhibitions that the institute hosts.

While the commercialisation may seem the only thing to do for Pisani, his Arab colleagues say they intend to fight such a move.

"While the IMA is still of considerable political interest at the Quai d'Orsay, we have a chance to prevent his commercialisation of the institute," Khatib told the Jordan Times.

Khatib told the Jordan Times.

"As soon as the commercial interests are able to dictate the policy of the IMA, then we are done with," says Khatib.

"We would rather have the Arab governments dictate our agenda than the commercial interests of God knows what firm or international industry," said Khatib.

Many IMA employees and Arab intellectuals in Paris still hope that the IMA could be a forum for Arab intellectual non-partisan discourse, which they say it was intended to be.

"We have nowhere in the Arab World where we can meet and share our thoughts and feelings openly without fear of retribution, while the Arab World prepares itself for the democracies of tomorrow we too should prepare our suggestions and agendas for tomorrow, if the Arab governments want to dictate to us, or the international firms want to dictate to us or the French government wants to make us a museum instead of an institute for documentation or discourse and thought then of course our aims will not rationalise."

Pisani is expected to meet with France's Foreign Minister Roland Dumas to discuss the subject as strikers vow to continue the strike until all their demands of reinstatement and change of the decision-making process are met.

Another Arab crisis... in Paris

Jerusalem remains the troubled city

By Eileen Alt Powell
The Associated Press

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM — When Jerusalem's Israeli mayor, Teddy Kollek, and the city's top Palestinian leader met for the first time, they talked about the future of the troubled city. History seemed to dictate they'd disagree.

Faisal Hussein, from an old Jerusalem Arab family, called for an independent Palestinian state alongside Israel with the city as a shared capital.

"What I am looking to see in Jerusalem is two capitals in one city, without walls," Hussein told the mayor. "I can see even two municipalities and one umbrella municipality. We can even think about one municipality."

Kollek responded that such a plan would result in redivision of the city of 500,000, which Israel rejects.

"I don't believe in the idea that in one city there could be two capitals because it would mean a frontier — a customs frontier, a police frontier, different laws, different prosecutions," the mayor said.

The two men were brought together at the invitation of the Kol Hair Hebrew weekly, which

published their comments in its Friday edition. The discussion was conducted last Monday in English, and a transcript was made available by the mayor's office.

The issue of Jerusalem, which is sacred to Muslims, Christians and Jews — is central to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Arab Jerusalem was occupied by Israel in the 1967 Middle East war and annexed. Most Western nations consider Jerusalem occupied territory.

The Israeli government insists that the Arab eastern sector must remain forever part of its capital and has refused to consider a land-for-peace settlement in the occupied territories.

Hussein and Kollek made it clear at the start of their discussion that neither was in a position to negotiate.

Both had reservations about the session, according to Kol Hair. Hussein waited a few days to reply and Kollek held off for three months before accepting the paper's invitation, it said.

Kollek, 79, has been mayor of Jerusalem for 25 years. The newspaper said he risked "a possible loss of popularity" in agreeing to meet with Hussein, considered the leading supporter of the Palestine Liberation

Organisation (PLO).

In the interview, Kollek noted that David Ben-Gurion, a founding father of Israel and its first prime minister, called for returning all the Arab land occupied in the 1967 war except for Jerusalem.

He added: "I don't want to be part of the ruling 1.6 million Arabs (in the occupied territories). But we cannot give up Jerusalem."

Hussein, 50 and son of a Palestinian hero of the 1948 war with Israel, rejected Kollek's appeal that Arab residents participate in Kollek's government.

"If I participate, maybe I can ease life for my people. But I am also sort of bluffing them, saying: 'You can build better houses, better schools, better life, but in the end you are part of this system which is not serving you.'"

And while he deplored the recent stabbings of Jews by Arabs, Hussein said there was little Palestinian leaders could do to intervene because "people are filled with bitterness."

He cited the government's policies of "collective punishment" in destroying homes, confiscating land and imprisoning Arab activists.

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Jordan Times

Dutchman takes world diving title

PERTH, Australia (R) — European gold medalist Edwin Jongsma claimed the Netherlands' first world championship diving crown when he won the inaugural men's one-metre platform event Saturday.

Jongsma dived with power and style to clinch the gold by a 10-point margin from American Mark Lenzi with China's Wang Yijie third.

The muscular Dutchman seized control with his third effort in the 11-dive final and pulled away steadily from his rivals.

He was so far ahead by the final series that a disappointing last effort worth only 48.60 points for a forward 3½ somersault in tuck position was still easily sufficient to keep 1989 World Cup champion Lenzi and Wang at bay. That was despite a big 67.50 for the American and a best-of-the-day 71.10 by the Chinese for a reverse 1½ somersault with 2½ twists.

"I feel I could have dived better today but that was the nature of the competition and I ended up number one," Jongsma said.

It was a second golden diving triumph for the Jongsma family. Edwin's sister Daphne won the European three-metre springboard title in 1987.

Wang failed by less than half a point to catch Lenzi but neither could trouble the runaway Dutchman.

Jongsma, 24, amassed an aggregate 588.51 points, with Lenzi on 578.22 and Wang 577.8.

It was a disappointing day for the Chinese, who Friday celebrated a spectacular victory in the women's 10-metre platform event by tiny 12-year-old Fu Mingxia.

Tan L., a three-metre springboard silver medalist in two Olympics and the last World Champion, led the first two dives but then fell back dramatically and finished ninth of the 12 finalists.

"The Chinese are definitely beatable on the one-metre board," said Jongsma after banishing fears of other nations that China would sweep all six diving medals in Perth.

Jongsma and Wang, top two ahead of Tan in Friday's qualifying series, appeared to be turning the contest into a two-way battle until Lenzi's way through the field with a splendid charge in the second half.

The American pulled ahead of Wang with his eighth dive but could not prevent Jongsma from becoming the first Dutchman to strike gold at the World Championships, emulating Annemarie Verstappen who won the 1982 women's 200 metres freestyle title.

"My ankle was bothering me a lot this week and my trainer

has been working with me because it has been giving me a lot of pain. I'm really happy and proud of myself for getting through," Lenzi said.

Sergei Lomanovsky of the Soviet Union, who had eclipsed Saturday's three medalists in winning the event at last August's Goodwill Games in Seattle ahead of Tan, could manage only seventh.

Jongsma moved out of the shadow of his older sister Daphne when he won the men's one-metre springboard diving world title.

Jongsma, 24, said he had mixed feelings as he grew up about being known as the little brother of Daphne, who is one year older.

"People would rather talk to her," he told journalists.

But he said while he found it frustrating that his talent was not being recognized then, he also appreciated the anonymity.

The Jongsma family are the only Dutch divers at the World Championships and Edwin is also the first men's world champion from the Netherlands in any water sport.

They both moved to Miami, Florida, in 1984 to concentrate on diving and two years later Edwin won sponsorship from the Dutch Olympic Committee.

A daily training routine including three hours diving plus weightlifting and stretching

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Lendl beats Steeb in exhibition

SALAMANDER BAY, Australia (AP) — Ivan Lendl defeated Germany's Carl-Uwe Steeb 6-4, 6-2 Saturday in the final of the Roche Racquet Classic, a six-man exhibition tennis tournament.

Lendl gave a commanding performance against the left-handed Steeb, one of his regular practice partners. No other matches were played Saturday. South African Christo Van Rensburg and Swede Jonas Svensson were nursing minor injuries and American David Pate had to play in the qualifying rounds of the New South Wales Open in Sydney.

Lendl, ranked no. 3 in the world, lost to Van Rensburg in his opening round-robin match Wednesday, but then beat Steeb and Australian Wally Masur to make the final.

The tournament, played at a tennis resort owned by Lendl's coach Tony Roche, is one of a series of events leading up to the Australian Open Championships.

Fromberg, Jonsson advance to final

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP) — Australian Davis Cup player Richard Fromberg downed Swede Christian Bergstrom in a three-set marathon Saturday to advance to the final of the \$175,000 BP Nationals Tennis Tournament.

Fromberg, who last year earned his first two professional tournament victories, defeated Bergstrom 6-3, 5-7, 7-6 (10-8) to earn a championship berth against unseeded Lars Jonsson.

Jonsson, also of Sweden, beat sixth-seeded Omar Camporese of Italy 5-7, 6-3, 7-6 (7-3). The tournament, which is being played on a Plexipave synthetic surface, offers a first prize of \$21,000.

Becker to play in Rio challenge

ADELAIDE, Australia (AP) — Three-time Wimbledon champion Boris Becker will conclude his preparation for the Australian Open Tennis Championships by playing in an exhibition event in Adelaide next week, organizers announced Saturday.

Becker, who was beaten in the first round of this week's Australian Hardcourt Championships in Adelaide, will play in the six-man Rio challenge from Wednesday rather than accept a wild card entry into the New South Wales Open in Sydney.

The Australian Open begins January 14 at the National Tennis Centre in Melbourne. Becker never has made it past the quarterfinals of the opening Grand Slam tournament of the year.

The German replaced Austrian Thomas Muster in the field for the Rio challenge, for which prize money is not disclosed. Muster has a shoulder injury, the organizers said in a statement.

Boxer dies in car crash

BRUGNATO, Italy (AP) — Argentine-born Italian Carlos Duran, a former European boxing champion and father of a reigning world champion, died from injuries sustained in a car crash along the Genoa-Leghorn Highway.

Duran was 54. He survived by his widow Augusta and their sons Massimiliano and Alessandro, both active boxers.

Massimiliano Duran is the reigning WBC cruiserweight champion. Traffic police reported that Carlos Duran's Alfa Romeo car slammed into the rear of a truck Wednesday near his Liguria town.

He died in the hospital of La Spezia one hour later from several skull and thoracic fractures, doctors said.

Duran, who was born in Santa Fe who had transferred to Italy in 1960 to become an Italian citizen, had been an European super welterweight and middleweight champion between 1966 to 1972. His boxing career had been dramatically marked by the death of an opponent, German Jupp Elze. Elze collapsed and died following an European title fight with Duran in Cologne.

Duran retired in 1973, with a professional record of 65-10-7 with one no-contest. He had later become the manager of his son Massimiliano, who successfully defended his WBC crown against Frenchman Anacleto Wamba in Ferrara last month.

Boxer slain in U.S.

PORTLAND, Oregon (AP) — Internationally ranked boxer Marcellus Allen is dead from a gunshot wound, according to Portland police.

The 24-year-old light heavyweight, who fought for a world championship last year, died at Emanuel Hospital and health centre at Wednesday morning, about 12 hours after being admitted with a gunshot wound, authorities said.

The slaying was under investigation Friday, but no arrests had been made, said police Sgt. Derrick Foxworth.

A 22-caliber handgun was recovered at the northeast Portland apartment where Allen was shot.

Foxworth said results of the police investigation would be turned over to the Multnomah County district attorney's office to decide whether charges should be pressed.

Allen was shot once after arguing with his estranged girlfriend, Danielle Anderson, 27, Foxworth said.

The Portland boxer bled to death from a gunshot wound to the abdomen, said Paul Horan, a Multnomah County deputy medical examiner.

Swiss wins skiing World Cup downhill

GARMISCH-PARTENKIRCHEN, Germany (AP) — Daniel Mahrer of Switzerland overcame a slow start and mastered an icy track to win a close men's Skiing World Cup Downhill race on the classic Kandahar course Saturday.

Mahrer covered the 3,455-metre course in one minute, 55.01 seconds to score his first World Cup victory of the season and the fifth of his career.

"It was incredibly difficult, you had to go all out from top to bottom," Mahrer said. "It was icy, it was very selective."

"I had a super race although I made a serious mistake. But I don't think there was anybody out there who did not make at least one mistake today," he said.

Mahrer, who turns 29 Sunday, started 12th and knew he had to turn in a very fast time to beat the previous racers.

He had a slow start but soon

found his groove and stayed on course through treacherous curves and jumps that had been partly covered with fresh overnight snowfall.

Mahrer picked up speed in the bottom part of the course after clocking only the 10th fastest intermediate time in the top.

He was nearly overtaken by the next skier, Aude Skardal of Norway. The Norwegian was faster than Mahrer at the top, but a small mistake at the bottom of the course cost Skardal precious time and he finished second at 1:55.07, in a tie with Hannes Zehentner of Germany.

The race was so close that only 0.22 of a second separated the top 10 finishers. It also produced a record of three ties in the top 10.

"They are all good, they are trying hard," Mahrer said.

Zehentner said he wasn't sure where he lost time after posting the fastest time in the top part of the course.

"We were all making mistakes, it was very tough. The long curves were icy and very difficult," he said.

Helen Hut Hoeffner of Austria, a winner here in 1985, and Lasse A. Jensen of Norway were both time out in 1:55.09 to tie for fourth place.

Berni Hutter of Germany and Rob Boyd of Canada both clocked 1:55.13 to share sixth place.

Franz Heinzer of Switzerland, who was first out of the starting gate, finished eighth at 1:55.16 and retained the lead in World Cup downhill standings by adding eight points for a total of 64.

Alberto Tomba of Italy, who did not race here, remained the overall World Cup leader with 97 points.

Marc Girardelli of Luxembourg, who had a chance of overtaking Tomba, finished a distant 47th and failed to pick up any World Cup points.

Skaardal retained his second place in downhill standings, adding 20 points for a total of 60.

Zehentner, who also added 20 points, vaulted to third place with 50, followed by Mahrer with 49.

In overall standings, Heinzer moved past Girardelli to third place with a total of 84 points.

Ole Christian Furuseth of Norway, who also skipped the downhill, remained second behind Tomba with 88 points.

The race had been thrown into doubt by warm weather and rain late Friday. But it later turned into snow and dumped a layer of fresh snow on top of the course, allowing the Garmisch-Partenkirchen event to go on as planned for the first time in four years.

A super-G is scheduled for Sunday.

Atlanta bids to host other world events

ATLANTA (AP) — This host city of the 1996 Olympics would like to sport some hospitality for two other major athletic events: The 1993 IAAF Indoor Track And Field Championships and games of soccer's 1994 World Cup.

The Athletics Congress, the U.S. governing body for track and field, formally submitted Atlanta's bid Friday to host the 1992 International Amateur Athletics Federation (IAAF) Indoor Track And Field Championships.

The IAAF has received only one other bid, from Toronto — ironically, one of Atlanta's rivals in the bidding for the '96 Olympics.

The IAAF will announce the winning city later this month.

The IAAF Indoor Championships would be held at the Georgia Dome, currently under construction and designated as the site of the National Football League's 1993 Super Bowl.

Meanwhile, Atlanta World Soccer submitted its bid Friday to the World Cup USA 1994. If selected, Atlanta would host portions of soccer's leading event being staged in 1994 in the United States for the first time.

The city's complete presentation is due in Washington in June. And later this year, the U.S. committee will make its site recommendations to FIFA, soccer's governing world body, said John Pendergast, vice president of Atlanta World Soccer.

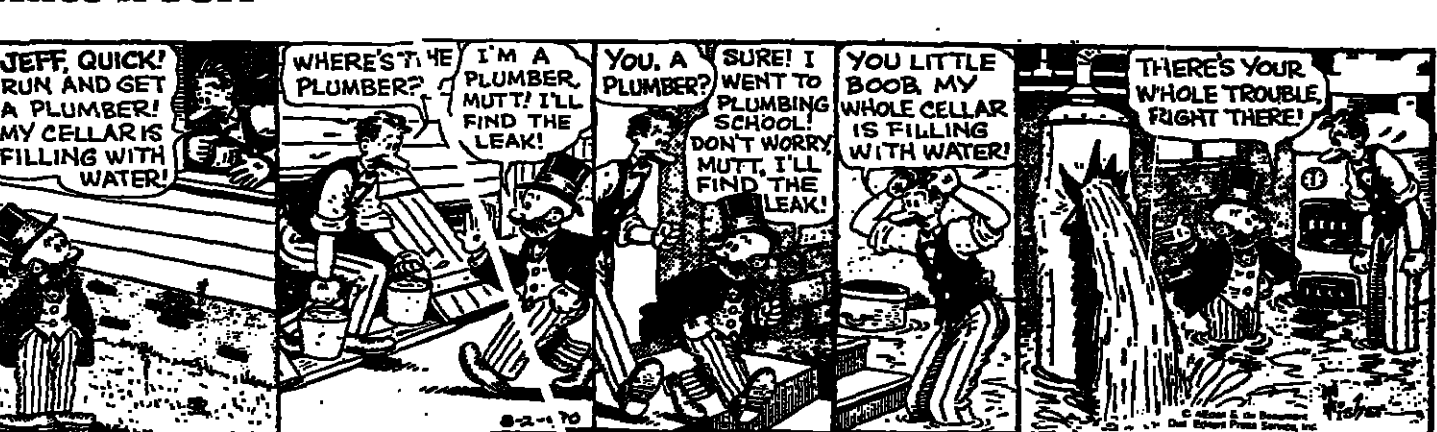
Stich, Kulti to meet in Adelaide tennis final

ADELAIDE, Australia (AP) — Michael Stich rallied twice in the second set to upset second-seeded American Jim Courier and advance to the final of the \$175,000 Australian Hardcourt Tennis Championships.

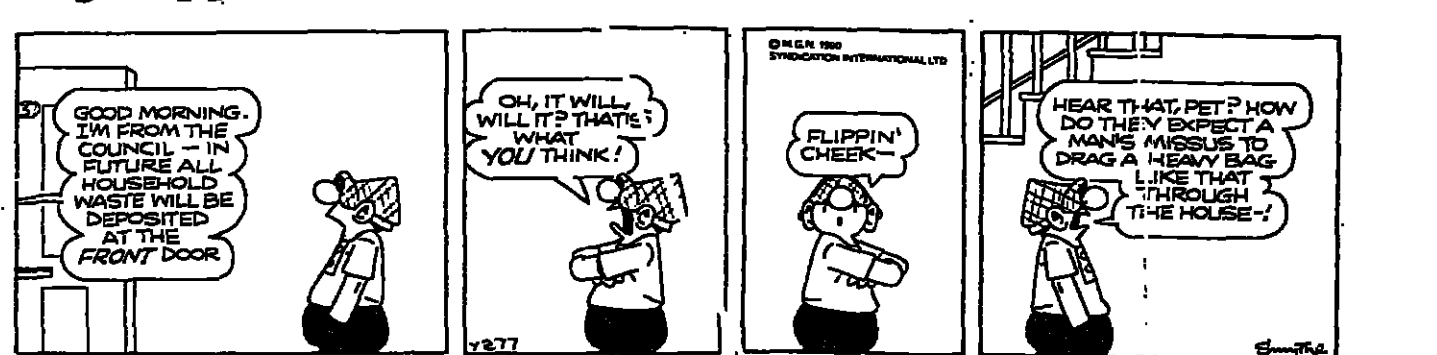
Stich came back from 0-3 in the set and from 3-6 in the tiebreakers to beat Courier 6-4, 7-6 (8-6) and earn a berth in Sunday's final against Swede Niclas Kulti.

Kulti, 19, defeated his compatriot and doubles partner Magnus Larsson 7-5, 6-4 in the other semifinal.

Mutt'n'Jeff



Andy Capp



Peanuts



HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SUNDAY JANUARY 6, 1991

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation.

GENERAL TENDENCIES: Certainly not a day to take chances but you will find that by a steady application to duties at hand and by not allowing yourself to go off on tangents, you will avoid potentially adverse aspects.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Forget trying to force another person to do what you think should be done and instead do your duty as a good citizen and you will make headway.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) This is the moment for an official and a partner act to best use this day by getting a new idea on developing your character.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) A day to sidestep that fellow associate who has a chip on his shoulder and to find what those close to you emotionally expect of you at this time.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Look for the silver lining in any contact with others and try to live the Golden Rule with both a partner, and a member of your family.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) There is much activity for you to do to show you are really of these about and you can gain their confidence and good will by being very helpful.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) A time to have a very good time at the pleasures you like so long as you do not make critical remarks to others and use much care in traveling.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) There are some proven principles you would be wise to put into practice at your residence if you want this day to be a day of rest and gladness.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) You are very much confused about what you should do about a particular situation facing you but if you rely on a usual contract more, it is solved.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) A day to be as practical as you can in doing those things that can bring a greater amount of stability in your life and in relations with others.

CAPIRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) A good friend and a financial problem can conflict so make a point to keep the two as separate as possible and concentrate upon what you wish.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) You have been so busy doing for others you have not had the time to concentrate upon your own desires so do this today and say away from the limelight.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Avoid that new interest that seems to be occupying your time and attention and get rid of the thing you have promised to do but have not yet.

THE BETTER HALF



JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

KREAM
GUCHO
BLTAR
WHARRO

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer: THE AT HIM

Yesterday's Jumbles: GLOVE HIKER CANINE BOUGHT
Answer: What the nudist camp's star athlete ran a hundred yards in—NOTHING

THE Daily Crossword

by Kenneth Witte

ACROSS
1 Information
5 Psychiatrist
10 Smidgens
14 Excited
15 Glamor
16 Concerning
17 Site of some memories?
20 Hab. priest
21 Hair solution
22 Sound
23 Go downhill
25 The Green —
26 Giant great
27 Football team
29 Nebula
30 element
32 Well-made
33 Ages and ages
36 Keeps silent
40 Cote
41 creature
42 Coronet
43 Barks shrilly
44 Musical
45 Middle East
46 Yellow color
48 Wise king
53 Wide open
54 Steeple
56 "— Maria"
57 inadvertent remark
60 Sheltered bay
61 Vibrant
62 Related
63 Filled with wonder
64 Gave out
65 Garden tools

DOWN
1 Pease
2 Spry
3 Subject
4 Gave by
5 Consecrate
6 Eng. poet
7 Fabrications
8 Sling
9 Soak flax
10 Point of view
12 Spread news
13 Bird food
18 Glass material
19 Cook too long
24 "— of the Files"
25 — and switch
27 Africaners
28 Noted illness
29 Female
30 Pull along
31 Porter
32 — back (recovered)
33 Potential bird
34 "Town"
35 Maltese name word
37 Sound system
38 Inebriated
39 — contemder
40 jabbered
41 Innocent
42 Put into categories
45 Bread spread
46 Conspirator in "Julius Caesar"
47 Beaming
48 Innocent
49 Strainer
50 Back to role
51 Small egg
52 Requires
54 Ft. town
55 Silvers or
58 Foster
59 Passing fancy
59 Extreme

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TANNAH HIRSCH
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LOOK TWICE BEFORE YOU LEAP

Both vulnerable. North deals.

NORTH
♠ K 10 3
♥ 6
♦ Q 8 7 5 3
♣ K J 4

WEST
♠ J 6 4
♥ Q 10 9 2
♦ K 4
♣ 10 9 8 2

EAST
♠ Q 8 7 5
♥ 9 5 4
♦ A J 6 2
♣ 7 6

SOUTH
♠ A 9 2
♥ A K J 7 3
♦ 10
♣ A Q 5 3

The bidding:
North East South West
Pass Pass 1 Pass
2 Pass 3 NT Pass
Pass Pass

Opening lead: Ten of ♠

Don't jump at the first possibility that presents itself. Quite often there's a more profitable line lurking in the bushes.

South made a practical decision when North, a passed hand, responded in South's short suit. Chances for slam were virtually nil, so South simply bid what he expected to make.

With eight fast tricks in sight, declarer won the opening club lead in dummy and took a losing heart finesse. West persevered with clubs, but when declarer gave up a second heart trick, the defenders needed

tricks fast. West found the way to get them by shifting to the king and another diamond. The defenders banked three diamond tricks to go with the two hearts—down one.

Declarer was in too much of a hurry. A careful inspection of the combined assets would have unearthed a ninth trick in a way that would almost guarantee the contract. Declarer should have gone after diamonds for his ninth trick!

To do that, declarer will probably need all the entries to the table he can muster, so the opening lead should be won in hand and the ten of diamonds run to East's jack. If the cards are distributed as above, the defenders are helpless. Suppose East shifts to a heart (best). Declarer rises with the king, crosses to dummy with the jack of clubs and leads a high diamond. West wins the king, but he cannot continue hearts into South's tenace. In due course, declarer will return to dummy with a club to force out the defense's remaining diamond winner, and the king of spades serves as the entry to cash the good diamonds. Declarer rump home with 10 easy tricks. The power of the diamond spotcards is so overwhelming that there are only a few improbable distributions where this line won't deliver the contract.

Golden Age Home

La seconde famille des vieux

Elle a travaillé presque toute sa vie comme femme de ménage. Elle a envoyé son fils unique à l'étranger pour qu'il poursuive ses études de médecine. Et aujourd'hui le voici, son diplôme en poche, revenu dans son pays. C'est sa mère qui a payé tous les frais. «Le fils ingrat s'est marié à une étrangère», précise Isaaq Shkair, présidente de l'association des Lits Blancs, dont le Golden Age Home (la maison de l'âge d'or) est une émanation. Les événements tournent très mal ensuite. La jeune épouse refuse totalement d'ouvrir son foyer à sa belle mère et le fils n'a qu'une idée: placer sa mère dans une maison de retraite. Il a choisi le Golden Age Home et il paye régulièrement la pension de 100 JD environ. Un jour, sa mère tombe malade. On la transporte à l'hôpital. On met son fils docteur au courant. Ce dernier répond qu'il arrive tout de suite. Elle l'attend toujours...

L'association des Lits Blancs a vu le jour le 2 octobre 1972. C'était une idée du Dr Mohammed Albachir, ancien ministre de la Santé. Un accident d'hé-

licoptère ne lui a pas permis de se réjouir de la réussite de cette création nouvelle dans une société où les vieilles personnes sont traditionnellement accueillies et respectées par leurs enfants, mais où, comme partout, certaines familles font exception. A cette époque, ouvrir et soutenir un foyer pour personnes âgées était presque une première au Moyen-Orient.

Outre le travail qu'ils font au sein de ce foyer, les responsables de l'association aident parfois les hôpitaux d'Etat. Ils donnent bénévolement des cours d'hygiène aux infirmières et au personnel, leur apprennent le bon fonctionnement des appareils électro-ménagers ou tiennent une cafétéria. C'est le cas notamment à l'hôpital Albachir à Ashrafieh.

Les résidents du foyer, actuellement au nombre de 57, ont souvent l'air misérable, un peu fatigué, et le visage pâle. Ils souffrent à l'évidence d'être éloignés de leur famille et de la société. Ils racontent avec nostalgie le déroulement des journées épuisantes de leur jeunesse et combien ils ont travaillé pour rendre leurs enfants plus



Le sourire des bénévoles aide les vieux à oublier leur abandon.

heureux. M. X est âgé de 68 ans. Originaire de Jafa en Palestine, il avoue qu'il hait ses belles-filles car aucune d'elles ne veut l'accueillir chez elle. «Je n'irai jamais voir mes petits-enfants. Non pas que je n'aie pas envie d'y aller, au contraire, mais on ne me reconnaît pas ce droit. C'est pourquoi je passerai tout le reste de ma vie malheureux et triste.» M. X ne veut pas qu'on sache son nom car il estime que sa famille aurait honte de lire son nom dans un journal. «Quelle vie! C'est l'oubli le plus total! s'exclame-t-il les larmes aux yeux. Est-ce parce que nous ne sommes plus bons à rien que la société ne veut plus de nous et nous rejette?»

Une mère de 60 ans, aveugle, très attachée à ses enfants réclame incessamment des communications téléphoniques avec eux. Les fils, pour leur part, restent totalement sourds à ces appels maternels. Alors le personnel de la maison donne le change, téléphonant d'un autre poste et se faisant passer pour ses enfants. Ils remplacent ainsi l'attention, la vitalité pour cette mère, que ses enfants ne savent lui donner, lui permettant de garder un certain équilibre.

L'effectif du personnel qui

travaille actuellement au Golden Age Home s'élève à 28 et l'association espère voir venir à elle encore plus de bénévoles s'intéressant à cette aide sociale. L'Etat, pour sa part, apporte sa contribution en payant l'hébergement des quelques personnes totalement dépourvues de ressources.

Trois fois plus d'hommes que de femmes ont élu domicile au Golden Age Home. La raison en est simple: les femmes sont généralement plus âgées que les hommes et se débrouillent seules chez elles.

Lyla Altaher, vice-présidente de l'association des Lits Blancs encourage vivement les jeunes à mieux respecter les lois de la religion, les traditions et les coutumes des ancêtres qui recommandent de donner une place convenable à ces vieux qui sont les jeunes d'autrefois. Mme Altaher ajoute qu'il est important de faire participer les vieux aux conversations familiales quotidiennes et de ne pas les laisser seuls trop souvent. Les couches sociales les plus atteintes, selon elle, par la maladie de «la belle fille au foyer; la belle mère à l'asile» sont souvent les couches les plus riches et les plus cultivées de la société.

Nouveaux prototypes

Les motos de l'avenir

En dépit des échecs qu'ils ont rencontrés dans ce domaine, les Français n'ont pas renoncé à construire une moto de grosse cylindrée pour le grand tourisme, ni même d'innover dans ce domaine.

Louis-Marie Boccardo, ingénieur du CNAM (Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers), qui s'est d'abord distingué dans la fabrication de machines de précision agro-alimentaires, s'est judicieusement fondé sur plusieurs études de marché pour conforter son projet.

Dans un premier temps, il crée une moto autour d'un moteur d'automobile fabriqué en grande série pour baisser le prix de revient. Ce fut l'Aéro 97 à moteur TU 2/4 SPA (celui de l'AX sport et de la 205 rallye), à quatre cylindres en ligne, refroidis par eau, de 1.124 cm³ de cylindrée, modifié de façon à répondre aux besoins d'une moto. Cette machine, sortie en 1989, peut atteindre 228 km/h et consomme 4,6 l à 120 km/h.

Elle se distingue notamment par l'autonomie que lui donne son réservoir de 30 litres, qui concourt aussi, par sa disposition triple, à équilibrer les masses. Un coffre spacieux a pris la place du réservoir habituel...

L'Aéro 97 mise aussi sur la longévité et les facilités d'entretien devenues courantes dans l'automobile. Il s'agit enfin de profiter de la production en grande série beaucoup plus économique (3.300 unités par jour dans le cas présent), d'éviter des études coûteuses, d'avoir facilement à disposition des pièces de rechange, et de permettre l'échange standard.

Puis, dans le même esprit, vint une autre machine sans précédent, puisque c'est un moteur Diesel qui la propulse: le TUD 1.360 cm³ qui fabrique Peugeot. D'après les études de marché

menées, le marché de la moto Diesel, engin économique et fiable, est appelé à se développer dans les années qui viennent. Déchargé du poids de l'automobile, ce type de moteur pourrait parcourir 250.000 km sans aucune difficulté.

Le TUD, qui développe 57 chevaux, entraîne l'engin à plus de 175 km/h pour une consommation d'une sobriété jamais atteinte sur une moto: 2,7 l à 90 km/h et 3,1 l à 120 km/h, au 100 km.

Le bruit et les vibrations propres au Diesel lorsqu'il tourne à l'arrêt, disparaissent dès que la première vitesse est enclenchée. Le moteur, qui est très souple et dont les accélérations sont bonnes, a un couple exceptionnellement puissant, même à bas régime. La Boccardo Aéro Diesel invite à la balade et aux longs parcours. Elle pourrait aussi séduire les amateurs de side-car.

Que la moto française ait disparu du marché avant cette renaissance spectaculaire ne doit pas faire oublier la contribution d'Elf Aquitaine à l'étude de motos de compétition depuis 1978, expérimentées sur les grands circuits mondiaux à partir de 1981.

Sur la machine expérimentale Elf X, l'ingénieur André Cortance a innové en remplaçant le cadre classique par un moteur porteur et en créant des suspensions directement inspirées de celles de l'automobile.

Des versions ultérieures, Elf E 1.000 cc et Elf 3, équipées de moteurs Honda, ont battu dix records du monde en 1986. Depuis le 28 septembre 1988, Honda Motor a acquis les droits d'exploitation de brevets pour appliquer la technique de suspension Elf à des machines de série.

Jacques Bandeneau

Pour oublier qu'on les oublie, les pensionnaires s'adonnent à la cigarette. 80 à 85% des résidents fument, une quantité moyenne de 2 à 3 paquets par jour.

Au sein du foyer, on s'efforce d'entretenir une atmosphère saine et la propreté règne d'une façon remarquable: les lits sont faits, le linge est d'un blanc parfait et les chambres sont confortables et aérées. Pour y accueillir un résident, l'association demande une somme de 80 JD par mois afin de couvrir les frais d'entretien. Une somme qui peut monter si la personne âgée n'est pas capable de faire sa toilette et d'être

autonome, jusqu'à 120 JD par mois en cas de paralysie quasi-totale.

L'âge minimum requis est de 60 ans, celui de la retraite. Il faut en outre n'avoir aucune personne de soutien à domicile et ne pas être atteint de maladies contagieuses.

Pour tous les résidents du Golden Age Home, le foyer est une planche de salut qui leur évite de sombrer dans la misère et le désespoir. Il ne fait aucun doute pourtant que tous auraient préféré qu'une plus grande gratitude familiale leur évite d'avoir recours à cette charité sociale.

Osama Al-Qudah

LA SEMAINE...

de Suleiman Sweiss

Gouvernement: la continuité

La semaine dernière, le gouvernement Badran, a procédé à un important remaniement ministériel. Cinq ministres «Frères Musulmans» y ont notamment fait leur entrée. Le remaniement était attendu depuis plusieurs semaines. Bien sûr l'entrée en force du bloc islamique dans le gouvernement un mois après l'élection de M. Arabiat —Frère Musulman lui-même— à la présidence de la Chambre des Députés, a fait sensation dans la presse internationale. Pourtant, la démocratie fonctionne et il est tout à fait logique que la première force politique du pays occupe des postes dans le pouvoir exécutif.

Cette évolution a suscité des réactions différentes à l'intérieur et à l'extérieur du pays. Nous laisserons tomber la réaction des Israéliens fondée sur une hostilité notoire envers la Jordanie, particulièrement dans les circonstances actuelles.

A l'intérieur, le remaniement n'est pas accueilli avec satisfaction par tout le monde. Trois groupes parlementaires ont été exclus du nouveau gouvernement. C'est le cas d'abord du groupe des libéraux qui est allé jusqu'à dire que le remaniement avait «divisé la chambre basse au lieu de la renforcer». Ensuite, le bloc des nationalistes a refusé d'entrer dans ce nouveau gouvernement malgré son alliance parlementaire avec le bloc islamique. Les nationalistes en effet ont voté contre le premier gouvernement Badran lors de sa formation en janvier de l'année dernière. Ils exigent la formation d'un nouveau gouvernement avec un nouveau programme ou le remaniement actuel ne répond pas à cette condition fondamentale à leurs yeux.

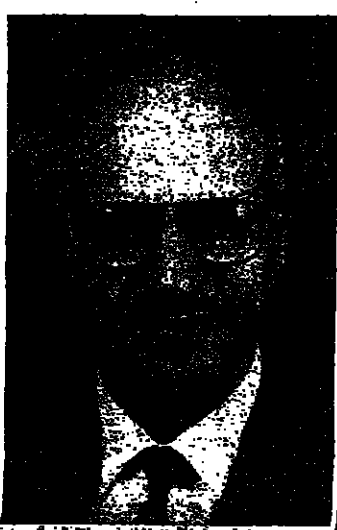
Une attitude semblable a été adoptée très tôt par le Rassemblement des partis de gauche. Celui-ci a annoncé —à la fin du mois de novembre dernier— qu'à son avis les circonstances que traverse actuellement le pays imposaient la formation d'un gouvernement de «coalition nationale». Le Rassemblement n'a donc pas été représenté au gouvernement et n'a même pas été consulté.

Le nouveau gouvernement Badran comprend donc trois «partis»: outre les Islamistes (7 portefeuilles), on y trouve le bloc national (2 ministres) et surtout une grande majorité (au moins quatorze portefeuilles) de ministres sans étiquette ou d'étiquette «autre», qui font plus ou moins partie de ce qu'on peut appeler l'établissement du pouvoir politique et économique dans le pays.

L'avantage de cette coalition est qu'elle assure une majorité de voix parlementaires (44 sur 80) au nouveau gouvernement Badran. Mais il ne s'agit pas d'un gouvernement d'unité nationale, dont on ressent pourtant le besoin urgent au niveau populaire compte tenu des dangers que court le pays dans la conjoncture actuelle très instable. On peut même aller plus loin et se demander s'il existe, au fond, de grandes différences entre les trois tendances qui forment le gouvernement. Tout au long de leur histoire en tant que parti politique autorisé, les Frères Musulmans ont soutenu les politiques appliquées au pays. De plus, leur programme pour sortir le pays de ses crises dans l'état actuel des choses n'est pas clair du tout. Leur accueil au sein du gouvernement n'est-il pas un piège destiné à mettre cette ambiguïté au grand jour?

Sur le plan du fonctionnement parlementaire, il n'est pas sûr non plus que le gouvernement recueille une majorité des voix quel que soit l'objet du vote. D'abord, une fissure est apparue au sein de la coalition islamico-nationaliste du fait de la non-participation des nationalistes au gouvernement. De plus, le vote de la nouvelle loi de Défense la semaine dernière a montré que les députés islamiques peuvent voter aux côtés des nationalistes et du bloc démocratique (la gauche), ce qui laisse penser que le gouvernement Badran pourrait tomber à n'importe quel moment faute de quelques voix.

Ce gouvernement, «blanc-bonnet bonnet-blanc» au delà des apparences, est-il conforme à l'image qu'on a aujourd'hui de la démocratie? Avons-nous d'ailleurs le droit de bavarder de tout cela au moment où une tempête menace de se déchaîner d'ici peu sur la région? L'actualité a tranché!



Juifs soviétiques en Israël

Les dangers de l'immigration

Le dernier jour de l'année qui vient de s'achever, l'immigrant juif soviétique No 200.000 est arrivé à l'aéroport Ben Gourion en Israël. Ce nombre est supérieur à celui de tous les immigrants juifs soviétiques (197.000) que le mouvement sioniste avait réussi à faire venir en Israël en trente ans (de 1960 à 1989). Il est même supérieur à celui des arrivants de toutes provenances depuis la création de l'Etat hébreu en 1948. Décirant le mouvement de transfert de ce grand nombre d'immigrants, surtout lors des deux dernières semaines de décembre dernier, Yitzhak Shamir, le Premier ministre israélien jubilait: «C'est un état d'urgence agréable!»

Ce succès intervient après de longs et nombreux déboires subis par le mouvement sioniste entre 1974 et 1989. Durant ces quinze ans, les Juifs arrivant d'URSS à la «correspondance» de Vienne préféraient prendre le chemin des Etats-Unis plutôt que de monter dans l'avion pour Israël, mais de plus, un nombre croissant de Juifs quittaient Israël. La crise économique, la guerre contre les Palestiniens, la difficulté d'adaptation à la société israélienne étaient, entre autres, les raisons de l'abandon du «rêve sioniste» transformé au fil des ans en cauchemar.

Cet afflux nouveau de Juifs d'URSS n'aurait pas pu avoir lieu sans le changement des lois soviétiques permettant aux citoyens d'émigrer ni surtout sans un accord —et peut-être une complicité— entre les autorités soviétiques et l'Agence juive, l'organisme semi-officiel qui administre l'immigration vers Israël.

Cette armada d'immigrants libère Israël d'un problème aigu et inquiétant pour les dirigeants israéliens: la «crise démographique». Cet Etat qui prétendait être «la patrie d'un peuple» cherchait à travers le monde des citoyens! En 1977, les dirigeants de Tel-Aviv étaient au bord du désespoir. Parallèlement au refus et à l'impossibilité des Juifs d'Union Soviétique d'immigrer,

les Palestiniens, eux, doubleront leur natalité. La peur d'une transformation d'Israël en un Etat bi-national empêchait ses dirigeants d'annexer la Cisjordanie et Gaza (environ 1,7 million d'habitants). Ajoutons à cela les 800.000 Palestiniens en Galilée, à Nazareth et dans le Triangle. Selon certains observateurs, les Israéliens étaient sur le point de négocier en 1988 et au début de 1989 avec l'OLP pour mettre fin à l'impasse de leur politique sur les plans militaire et démographique.

L'afflux des Juifs soviétiques en Palestine occupée, en revanche, pose de gros problèmes pour la question de la paix au Proche-Orient.

D'abord, cette immigration renforce l'intransigence des dirigeants israéliens dans leur refus de toute solution politique ou compromis reconnaissant le minimum de droits nationaux aux Palestiniens, en premier lieu leur droit à établir leur propre Etat en Palestine. La politique américaine ne donne aucune impression de faire un tant soit peu pression sur Tel-Aviv pour réduire cette intransigence. Pire encore, Washington accorde une aide financière à Israël pour l'absorption des nouveaux immigrants.

Cette situation ne laisse aux Palestiniens d'autre choix que de poursuivre leur litif. Leur détermination à s'accrocher à leur terre va doubler car, d'ores et déjà, les Israéliens ne cachent pas leurs intentions. Pour implanter des centaines de milliers de Juifs soviétiques, il faut de la terre, du travail, de l'eau, etc... Les dirigeants de Tel-Aviv parlent de l'arrivée d'un million de Juifs d'ici 1992. Les fanatiques israéliens repartent avec enthousiasme de «construire le Grand Israël». Cela signifie que la politique d'expulsion —ou de transfert— des Palestiniens va connaître un rythme accéléré. Pire encore, la Jordanie elle-même est menacée par les visées expansionnistes des dirigeants israéliens. Alors, la paix qu'on croyait si proche devient de fait

de plus en plus hors d'atteinte.

Les dirigeants jordaniens ont pris conscience de ces dangers dès le début de l'année dernière. En concertation permanente avec l'OLP, de grands efforts politiques et diplomatiques ont été déployés pour mettre en garde les autres pays arabes et les principales puissances du monde contre les nouveaux dangers qui menacent les efforts pour ramener la paix au Proche-Orient, du fait de l'immigration des Juifs soviétiques en Israël.

D'autre part, il semble que les autorités israéliennes se heurtent à de gros problèmes pour l'installation de leurs nouveaux immigrants. D'abord l'investissement insuffisant ne permet pas de construire assez de logements. On a donc dû avoir recours à des tentes et des caravanes pour les loger dans les territoires palestiniens occupés. Vu le grand nombre d'arrivants chaque jour, semblent s'ajouter des problèmes d'administration, d'accueil et de manque de services. Nombreux sont les nouveaux arrivants qui sont victimes du chômage. Ils souffrent de la vie chère et des difficultés d'adaptation à une société de type occidental minée par de nombreuses contradictions. De jeunes savants soviétiques qui vivaient bien en Union Soviétique vivent actuellement dans la misère en Israël. Des femmes de formation supérieure ont dû se prosterner pour pouvoir gagner leur vie. C'est ce qui ressort des informations en provenance d'Israël. Déjà, 20.000 immigrants juifs demandent à retourner en Union Soviétique. Une immigrante, Natacha, a écrit dans une lettre à une amie soviétique au Caire: «Tu avais raison quand tu m'as conseillée de ne pas venir ici. Mais que puis-je faire maintenant? Tout est cher ici, la vie est vide, l'armée tue les palestiniens, tout le monde court derrière l'argent. Je me sens étrangère ici. Certains d'entre nous pensent déjà au suicide: nous avons été victimes de la propagande

sioniste.» (Lettre publiée par l'hebdomadaire égyptien «Al-Ahali» le 12 décembre dernier).

Au delà de ces drames que la presse dite internationale cache minutieusement, l'immigration des Juifs soviétiques est censée équilibrer la composition de la société israélienne. Rappelons que celle-ci distingue officiellement des citoyens de première catégorie (les Ashkénazes ou Juifs européens), ceux de second rang (les Sépharades ou Juifs orientaux) et enfin les Arabes palestiniens, citoyens de troisième catégorie. Une société raciste par excellence, quoi!

Les Sépharades représentent 70% de la population israélienne. Ils sont pourtant systématiquement écartés des postes supérieurs de l'Etat et ne représentent que 20% des membres du parlement israélien. Les Ashkénazes, qui se considèrent supérieurs à leurs concitoyens Sépharades, craignent la domination numérique de ceux-ci. L'afflux des Juifs soviétiques considérés comme «Ashkénazes» va rétablir l'équilibre dans l'hétérogénéité de la société israélienne. Cela pourrait être source de nouveaux conflits entre les deux communautés en approfondissant le sentiment de ségrégation raciale.

La communauté internationale devrait assumer sa responsabilité face à ce problème grave, car plus que jamais la paix au Proche-Orient est l'affaire du monde entier, particulièrement des puissances européennes qui ont créé Israël au cœur du monde arabe. Cette paix passera forcément par la reconnaissance des droits nationaux des Palestiniens. Si ceux-ci ne sont pas protégés de l'agression et de l'expansionnisme israéliens, personne ne pourra les blâmer d'accentuer leur lutte contre l'occupation comme l'a évoqué la semaine dernière un haut responsable du Fatah, Abou Iyad, lors d'un grand meeting à Amman.

Suleiman Sweiss

EN BREF

Remaniement. Le Premier ministre jordanien, Moudar Badran, a procédé mardi à un remaniement ministériel qui a permis l'entrée des Frères Musulmans au gouvernement pour la première fois dans l'histoire de la Jordanie. Les Frères Musulmans obtiennent cinq portefeuilles dont le ministère de l'Education qui était la condition sine-qua-non de leur participation. Les ministères de la Justice, de la Santé, des Affaires religieuses et du développement social leur ont été également alloués. Parmi les dix nouveaux ministres, sept étaient députés et un sénateur. Marwan al-Kassem, seul ministre «politique» à avoir démissionné, est remplacé au ministère des Affaires Etrangères par le député Taher al-Masri.

Tournée. Le roi Hussein a entrepris une ultime mission en Europe pour tenter de prévenir un conflit dans la région. Au cours de cette tournée, il a notamment rencontré le nouveau Premier ministre britannique John Major.

Avions. Deux nouvelles compagnies aériennes occidentales, KLM (Pays-Bas) et Lufthansa (Allemagne), cessent de desservir Amman ce mois-ci en raison des pertes enregistrées sur cette ligne du fait de la crise du Golfe. KLM et Lufthansa assuraient chacune deux vols hebdomadaires vers Amman. Après la suspension de leurs vols, Air-France est l'unique compagnie occidentale à desservir cette destination. Alitalia et Swissair avaient suspendu leurs vols en octobre, également pour des raisons commerciales.

Déploiement. La Jordanie a renforcé son dispositif militaire défensif face à Israël à la suite des récentes déclarations israéliennes mettant en garde Amman contre l'utilisation de son territoire par l'Irak. Une source jordanienne bien informée a précisé que des unités supplémentaires d'infanterie et de blindés jordaniennes ont pris récemment position le long des 380 km de la ligne de cessez-le-feu avec l'Etat hébreu. La défense anti-aérienne autour d'Amman a par ailleurs été renforcée.

Palestine. Le président de l'Assemblée Générale de l'ONU, Gnido de Marco, est arrivé hier à Amman et a visité le camp palestinien de Baqa. Il revenait d'une visite de 48 heures en Cisjordanie et à Gaza occupés par Israël, la première du genre depuis l'invasion israélienne. Il a lancé à cette occasion un appel à une conférence internationale de paix, indiquant que la situation dans les territoires devenait de plus en plus explosive. Il a également mis en garde Israël contre une poursuite de la politique d'installation de nouveaux immigrants dans ces territoires. Pour la quatrième fois depuis l'invasion irakienne du Koweït, les Etats-Unis ont, par ailleurs, donné leur accord dans la nuit de jeudi à vendredi à un texte du Conseil de Sécurité critiquant Israël pour sa politique dans les territoires occupés.

Sommet. Quatre dirigeants arabes, qui ont adopté des positions différentes dans la crise du Golfe, se sont réunis jeudi en Libye pour tenter de prévenir la guerre, à douze jours de l'expiration de l'ultimatum fixé à l'Irak pour quitter le Koweït. Les présidents égyptien et syrien (qui ont envoyé des troupes en Arabie Saoudite) ainsi que le président du gouvernement militaire soudanais (qui a apporté son appui à l'Irak) se sont réunis à Misourata, ville du littoral méditerranéen de la Libye, à l'invitation du chef de la Révolution libyenne, Mouammar Kadhafi. Le colonel Kadhafi a déclaré qu'il avait jugé nécessaire de «rechercher une position commune et une union des efforts concernant la crise du Golfe. Les présidents syrien et égyptien ont préconisé publiquement une solution pacifique de la crise et, tout en condamnant l'occupation du Koweït, ont affirmé ne pas vouloir un écrasement de la puissance militaire irakienne. L'un et l'autre redoutent qu'Israël n'en tire profit, de même que des puissances régionales telles que la Turquie ou l'Iran.

Propositions. Les autorités irakiennes ont accepté samedi la proposition américaine d'une rencontre Tarek Aziz-James Baker, chefs de la diplomatie des deux pays, le 9 janvier à Genève. Chacun des deux parties a cependant insisté sur son refus de transiger sur le fond. Les Américains continueront de réclamer une évacuation complète du Koweït et refuseront d'établir un lien avec le problème palestinien, ce que les Irakiens, eux, considèrent comme un préalable indispensable, faute duquel «cette rencontre se limitera à une entrevue formelle de cinq minutes». De son côté, le ministre français des Affaires étrangères Roland Dumas, a annoncé à Luxembourg un plan en sept points d'initiative franco-allemande qui consiste principalement en une garantie de non-agression à l'Irak en échange d'une promesse d'évacuation du Koweït assortie d'un calendrier précis. Une ou plusieurs conférences internationales de paix sur les problèmes du Proche-Orient pourraient également être négociées. Tarek Aziz est invité dans ce cadre à rencontrer jeudi 11 des représentants des autorités italiennes, hollandaises et luxembourgeoises.

Voyage. Le ministre irakien des Affaires étrangères, Tarek Aziz, s'est entretenu jeudi à Bagdad avec le président de la commission des Affaires étrangères de l'Assemblée Nationale française, Michel Vauzelle, «de la situation dans la région du Golfe». Ce dernier a également été reçu hier par le président irakien Saddam Hussein. M. Aziz a affirmé à M. Vauzelle «la position inchangée de l'Irak face à la crise du Golfe et son souhait de voir traiter toutes les questions de la région et en priorité la question palestino-sionienne, dans le cadre d'un dialogue basé sur la justice et l'équité». M. Vauzelle, ancien porte-parole de l'Elysée et personnalité proche du président Mitterrand, avait affirmé mercredi à Amman, où il a passé la nuit avant de se rendre à Bagdad, que son voyage en Irak est «exploratoire» et constitue une «démarche à titre strictement personnel». Il a précisé qu'il n'était porteur d'aucun message ni mandat.

Turquie. L'Alliance atlantique a décidé mercredi d'envoyer en Turquie quarante deux avions de combat appartenant à la force mobile (AMF) de l'OTAN pour défendre ce pays en cas d'agression irakienne. Ces avions belges, allemands et italiens seront déployés dans le sud-est de la Turquie entre le 6 et le 10 janvier. Cette mesure vise à démontrer la solidarité de l'Alliance atlantique et sa détermination face à toute menace dirigée contre les territoires alliés pour contribuer ainsi à la dissuasion et à la défense.

Détournement. Le détournement d'un avion des lignes intérieures algériennes a connu dimanche dernier en début de matinée son épilogue, sans effusion de sang, sur la piste de l'aéroport d'Annaba. La totalité des 82 otages et les six membres d'équipage ont été libérés apparemment en bonne santé. Les deux pirates se sont rendus et ont été conduits vers une destination inconnue. Les auteurs du détournement seraient deux déserteurs algériens de 22 et 23 ans, dont on ignore encore l'identité. Selon le pilote, les deux jeunes, exaspérés par leurs conditions de vie auraient décidé de détourner l'avion sur un coup de tête.

Somalie. Les rebelles du Congrès de la Somalie Unifiée (USC) ont déclenché dimanche dernier à Mogadiscio une vaste offensive afin de mettre fin aux 21 ans de présidence de Mohammed Siad Barré. Selon les rebelles, les combats ont eu lieu à l'intérieur même du palais présidentiel abandonné par Siad Barré et d'innombrables cadavres de soldats jonchaient les alentours. Siad Barré se trouvait toujours hier près de l'aéroport d'où il avait la possibilité de quitter la Somalie. Il a proposé d'organiser des pourparlers avec les rebelles. La France, quant à elle, a donné son feu vert pour l'opération béniéenne destinée à évacuer par la mer les ressortissants étrangers bloqués à Mogadiscio. C'est l'Ambassadeur de France en Somalie qui doit décider, en fonction des conditions locales, à quel moment elle pourra commencer, une vingtaine de Français sont en ce moment à Mogadiscio, ainsi que 350 Italiens, 70 Américains, 30 Allemands et 4 Belges, entre autres.

Corse. De nombreux attentats ont ensanglanté et causé d'importantes destructions ces dernières semaines en Corse. Six attentats à l'explosif, revendiqués par le Front de Libération Nationale Corse (FLNC), ont notamment été commis dans la nuit de mercredi à jeudi sur l'ensemble de l'île, contre des biens immobiliers. Le gouvernement français a annoncé à l'issue d'un conseil des ministres restreint que des mesures vont être prises pour permettre à la justice de sanctionner les coupables de ces actions. Le projet de statut de la Corse présenté par le ministre de l'Intérieur Pierre Joxe, qui prévoit une autonomie relativement large de la Corse et comporte la reconnaissance de la notion de «peuple corse, composante du peuple français», sera mené jusqu'à son terme et selon le calendrier prévu, a-t-on précisé.

L'année des grands bouleversements

L'année 1990 a connu des bouleversements considérables dans l'équilibre du monde. L'effondrement des régimes communistes en Europe de l'est, la réunification allemande, les troubles violents dans de nombreux pays du Tiers-Monde et finalement la crise du Golfe, dont pas un citoyen du globe ne suit l'évolution avec anxiété aujourd'hui, sont les signes les plus marquants de cette soudaine ébullition. Commencée dans l'euphorie des ouvertures et des libérations, l'année 1990 s'est achevée il y a six jours dans le doute et la peur du lendemain.

L'année a débuté par des changements trompeurs dans de nombreuses parties du monde et s'est terminée par l'éclosion d'un nombre impressionnant de problèmes.

L'Europe de l'est s'est emportée dans des problèmes éthiques, politiques et économiques après avoir mis fin à des décennies de répression. Les Etats-Unis et d'autres pays riches ont vu leurs économies pâlir soudainement. Et l'année s'est achevée par l'envoi de soldats venus de nombreux pays en Arabie Saoudite pour une guerre

possible contre l'Irak après son annexion du Koweït.

La communauté européenne a accompli des progrès importants dans la perspective de son unification économique. Une évolution reflétée symboliquement par la rencontre sous la Manche des travailleurs anglais et français qui creusent chacun une moitié du tunnel destiné à relier les deux pays.

Mais la technologie n'a pas toujours progressé aussi sereinement. Le télescope spatial américain Hubble a pris son orbite avant qu'on découvre

qu'une défaillance anéantissait l'essentiel de ses capacités d'observation des cieux, et le programme de navette spatiale a été sérieusement perturbé par des fuites d'hydrogène.

L'environnement a été un souci dominant. Parmi les principales menaces qu'affronte la planète figurent l'effet de serre, la déforestation et la pollution.

Les désastres ont frappé violemment. Un tremblement de terre a causé la mort d'au moins 50.000 personnes en Iran et un autre a tué 1.600 personnes aux Philippines. A la Mecque, quelque 1.100 pèlerins sont morts en quelques minutes dans un tunnel conduisant au premier des lieux saints de l'Islam.

La mort a aussi rappelé à elle de nombreuses personnalités (Voir encadré).

Retour en arrière

Un vent d'allégresse avait soufflé au début de l'année sur l'Europe de l'est. Ses citoyens fêtaient la chute du totalitarisme en Allemagne de l'est, en Bulgarie, en Roumanie, en Tchécoslovaquie et en Pologne. Les élections qui avaient mis les communistes à la porte en Hongrie ne dataient que de quelques mois.

La Pologne débuta l'année par un programme de "traitement de choc" sauvage, destiné à résusciter son économie dévastée. Mais le passage rapide à l'économie de marché mit une bonne partie de la population au chômage et provoqua une flambée inquiétante des prix.

Le syndicat Solidarité — dont les décennies de combat avaient finalement fait tomber les communistes — implosa et Lech Walsia battit le Premier ministre Tadeusz Mazowiecki, son ancien compagnon, aux élections pour la présidence du pays.

La Bulgarie et la Roumanie tinrent leurs premières élections démocratiques en près d'un demi-siècle et les électeurs outragés descendirent dans les rues pour protester contre la victoire des communistes dans ces élections. Les mineurs, à l'appel du président roumain, mirent fin brutalement à une manifestation à Bucarest.

La réunification allemande eut un écho immense dans toute l'Europe. Mais les habitants de l'ancienne Allemagne de l'est durent affronter de fortes hausses des prix et un chômage sévère alors que leur pays fusionnait avec l'Allemagne de l'ouest en plein essor. Le chancelier Helmut Kohl, qui fut l'artisan de cette réunification, fut reconduit dans ses fonctions en décembre pour gouverner le pays et tenter de le sortir de ses nouvelles difficultés.

L'Union Soviétique a entrepris de grandes réformes: elle a adopté des lois autorisant le pluralisme politique, la liberté de religion, la liberté de la presse. Le Parti Communiste a cessé de s'opposer à la propriété privée et abandonné les principes clés de sa doctrine. Mais tandis que le pouvoir central relâchait la pression, toutes les républiques du pays réclamaient leur souveraineté ou leur indépendance absolue, tandis que des tensions ethniques éclataient et que les troupes soviétiques faisaient irruption dans la capi-

tales de l'Azerbaïdjan pour mettre fin à une émeute dirigée à la fois contre le Kremlin et la république voisine d'Arménie.

Dans le même temps, l'économie soviétique s'enfonçait de plus en plus dans la récession. Une pénurie de pain sans précédent ravagea Moscou et, malgré une bonne moisson, le pays entamait l'hiver par des appels à l'aide alimentaire en direction des autres pays.

Paradoxalement, tandis que le président Gorbatchev conduisait le pays vers une liberté nouvelle — et remportait pour cela le prix Nobel — le parlement soviétique lui donnait de nouveaux pouvoirs pour tenter de lui permettre de faire face au désastre économique.

Le ministre des Affaires Etrangères Edouard Chevardnadze, ami très proche de Gorbatchev, démissionna brutalement le 20 décembre en mettant en garde le parlement: les durs du pouvoir seraient en train de pousser le pays vers la dictature.

Mais tandis que l'URSS s'effondrait dans ses problèmes intérieurs, elle réduisait son influence militaire mondiale en retirant une partie de ses troupes de l'Europe et de l'Asie et en présidant à la transformation du Pacte de Varsovie en pure et simple entité politique.

C'est ce qui permit aux Etats-Unis de jouer un rôle déterminant dans la crise du Golfe qui éclata après que l'Irak envahit et annexa le Koweït, au mois d'août.

Le président américain Bush répondit rapidement en organisant un vaste déploiement de troupes en Arabie Saoudite avec l'aide de nombreux pays.

Le président irakien Saddam Hussein relâcha des milliers d'otages étrangers en décembre tandis que Bagdad et Washington étaient dans l'incapacité de se mettre d'accord sur la date d'une rencontre entre les leaders des deux pays.

Alors que les Etats-Unis envisageaient l'éventualité d'une guerre impopulaire, ils devaient simultanément affronter la récession de leur économie. Le spectre de la crise refaisait surface et d'autres pays commençaient à ressentir les effets d'un recul économique mondial.

Le Premier ministre britannique, Margaret Thatcher, qui avait présidé au redémarrage économique de la Grande-Bretagne dans les années 1980, démissionna brusquement, sous la pression d'une insatisfaction croissante au sein de son propre parti sur l'inflation, la hausse des taux d'intérêt et le nouvel impôt, la «Poll-Tax».

Les troubles du Moyen-Orient dépassèrent les limites de la région du Golfe. Israël se trouvait confronté à la troisième année de lutte palestinienne dans les territoires occupés. Lors de ce qui fut le plus violent massacre depuis l'établissement d'Israël, la police israélienne tua plus de 21 palestiniens à Jérusalem est. Les désaccords sur la question palestinienne mirent fin à la coalition du gouvernement d'Yitzhak Shamir, mais l'opposition fut incapable de constituer un gouvernement d'alternance et Shamir, homme de droite, revint au pouvoir.

Au Liban, un des conflits les

plus intriqués du monde prit fin. Les milices qui se partageaient Beyrouth se mirent d'accord sur un retrait de la capitale — après que les forces du général chrétien rebelle Michel Aoun aient capitulé — et la tristement célèbre ligne verte fut démantelée. Pourtant, le retrait des milices ne résout pas le problème de la présence syrienne massive dans le pays, non plus que celui de ce qu'Israël appelle sa «zone de sécurité» au sud du pays.

En Afrique du Sud, le gouvernement a réalisé des progrès sensibles dans la voie du démantèlement du système de ségrégation raciale de l'apartheid — avec notamment l'abolition des mesures discriminatoires dans les lieux publics — et a libéré le leader noir Nelson Mandela après qu'il eut passé 28 ans en prison. Mais à son retour d'une tournée mondiale triomphale, Mandela découvrit l'horreur des combats entre noirs, opposant son mouvement l'ANC et le parti rival Inkatha.

Les Nicaraguayens virent le retrait du mouvement sandiniste marxiste du pouvoir et les rebelles de la Contra prirent la fuite, mais la dégringolade économique du pays se poursuivit. Vers la fin de l'année le nouveau gouvernement devait affronter de larges mouvements de protestation.

Au Bangladesh, le Président Hussein Mohammed Ershad dut céder aux manifestations et démissionner. Le président qui doit être élu cette année sera la première personne démocratiquement désignée pour présider aux destinées de ce pays ravagé par la misère et les désastres naturels.

En Haïti eurent lieu les premières élections libres et le Révérend Jean-Bertrand Aristide, prêtre des pauvres, remporta la présidence. Mais les partisans de l'ancien dictateur Duvalier ont promis de défier le nouveau régime.

La démocratie a aussi fait son chemin en Amérique du sud. Patricio Aylwin a battu le général Pinochet dans la course pour la présidence du Chili, et Fernando Collor de Mello est devenu le chef librement élu du Brésil. Les Péruviens ont élu Alberto Fujimori, candidat de dernière minute, exprimant ainsi leur désespoir devant l'échec économique du pays et l'insurrection de la guérilla d'extrême gauche.

Les deux Corées ont entamé des discussions prudentes et tourmentées, laissant espérer que la péninsule en finira bientôt avec sa division.

Le Libéria, pays fondé par d'anciens esclaves venus des Etats-Unis, a sombré dans le désespoir après un an de guerre civile. Le président Samuel Doe a été torturé puis assassiné, et les citoyens ont été affamés dans les rues de Monrovia alors que deux armées rebelles se livraient un combat acharné pour la domination du pays.

Au Pakistan enfin, le Premier ministre Bénéazir Bhutto fut chassé par les militaires après avoir été pendant vingt mois le premier leader femme d'une nation musulmane moderne.

(Agences)

A L'AFFICHE

Guerre et Paix Baptême du feu

Le Pont — Die Brücke (1959) — film de Bernhard Wicki présenté au Centre Culturel Royal (sous l'égide de l'Institut Goethe) le samedi 12 janvier, est l'histoire d'un groupe d'adolescents qui n'ont aucune idée de ce qu'est la guerre et la découvrent du jour au lendemain. A quel prix! Un seul des sept écoliers survit et, du fait de leur résistance, la petite ville idyllique qui était leur domicile — jusque là épargnée par les combats — subit les ravages d'une canonnade.

Le vrai sujet de ce puissant film — doublé en anglais — est la guerre. Elle est décrite dans un scénario riche d'observations: ses effets, ses conséquences, et la puissance du mal qu'elle représente.

Nous sommes en avril 1945, derniers jours de la seconde Guerre Mondiale. L'armée allemande bat la retraite; les Américains sont en train de s'emparer du IIIème Reich et, dans une petite ville, les commandants de la Wehrmacht mobilisent tous les civils valides et encore bons pour le service; parmi eux, des lycéens.

Wicki — scénariste avec Michael Mansfeld et Karl-Wilhelm Vivier — montre l'effet que la guerre a eu sur les gamins avant même qu'elle ait atteint leur bourg. Elevés dans des milieux variés — riches et pauvres — ils proviennent, dans plus d'un cas, de foyers fortement ébranlés, où manque un père, une mère. Le déséquilibre au sein de la vie familiale est d'autant plus sérieux quand le parent restant est impliqué dans une liaison. Le recrutement promet aux garçons l'aventure; mais il déteste aussi certains d'entre eux d'un fardeau émotionnel.

Filmé en noir et blanc — ce qui donne à la ville un air assez morne — le film se déroule sans musique, choix judicieux pour un drame où les sons les plus importants seront ceux qui brisent le silence: éclats d'obus, cliquetis d'armes. Cet abominable fracas suscite un accablement qui trace comme des sillons sur les visages des gosses, réaction qui nous montre l'expérience de ces soldats en herbe et leur naïveté en matière de guerre.

C'est bien le but recherché par Bernhard Wicki, accentué par l'image centrale de son film: celle des gosses gardant un pont où on les a envoyés pour les éloigner des zones de combat. Montant la garde, ils ont l'air d'une bande d'orphelins égarés. L'idée est renforcée une deuxième fois par l'intrigue: le tour que le hasard jouera à ces innocents. Après qu'un de leurs camarades eut été abattu par les mitraillettes d'un avion de chasse et que les chars de l'armée américaine jaillissent de leur côté de la ville, ces gosses se transforment en protagonistes d'une tragédie: condamnés d'avance, ils protégeront, corps et âme, un pont que la Wehrmacht a leur insu avait l'intention de faire sauter le lendemain. Poignantes, ces scènes ne sont qu'une partie des séquences qui nous décrivent le désordre que la guerre amènera en s'approchant de la ville paisible. La transformation de ces garçons en soldats constitue un élément de ce chaos social, de même que les conscrits âgés qui ont depuis longtemps passé l'âge où le dressage militaire offre des instants de divertissement. Les vrais soldats — que les gosses dans leurs uniformes bien brochés rencontreront sur le pont — sont des bandes ébouriffées et en haillons, qui ne croient plus à l'utilité du combat et, incrédules, se demandent ce que les gosses viennent foutre dans ce coin.

Evitant toute implication idéologique, Bernhard Wicki a réalisé un film où la surenchère d'une violence insensée nous livre un panorama d'images, dans lesquelles on aura du mal à entrevoir des héros. Tout ce qui s'oppose à la guerre est anéanti par elle. Dans ce système, c'est l'irrationnel qui anime les comportements. Les coups de colère et la peur, beaucoup plus que l'idéologie, provoquent le courage.

La guerre: il n'y a pas de quoi pavoiser.

Samir Kamal

DIVERS

Documentaire. Le CCF propose cette semaine un documentaire vidéo sur «La naissance des montagnes», dans le cadre d'un cycle de reportages scientifiques sur la géographie terrestre. Centre Culturel Français, le samedi 12 janvier à 16h ou sur demande.

TELEVISION

DIMANCHE

17h30 - "Dorothée". Feuilleton. L'histoire d'une jeune fille, à la recherche d'un trésor.
19h00 - Le Journal.
19h15 - "Faut pas rêver". Documentaire.

LUNDI

18h00 - La Camorra. Série policière.
19h00 - Le Journal.
19h15 - Magazine sportif hebdomadaire.

MARDI

18h00 - "Denver le dernier dinosaure", dessin animé.
18h30 - "Fusion". Magazine documentaire.
19h00 - Le Journal.
19h15 - "Aujourd'hui en Jordanie". Magazine local préparé et présenté par Saleh Madi.

MERCREDI

18h00 - "Thalassa". Le magazine de la mer, consacré cette semaine à la discrétion des baleines.
18h30 - "Système gauche". Deuxième épisode d'une série de 50 qui raconte la cohabitation, dans le même immeuble, d'une famille de Français d'origine algérienne et d'une famille franco-française.
19h00 - Le Journal.
19h15 - "Carnet de notes". Extraits de musique classique.

JEUDI

18h00 - "Souris". Dessin animé.
18h30 - Splendeur sauvage. Documentaire sur la vie des animaux.
19h00 - Le Journal.
19h15 - Reportage d'actualité sur les femmes vendues de voitures.

VENREDI

18h00 - "Pour tout l'or du Transvaal". Deuxième épisode d'une série documentaire en six parties consacrée à la lune qui oppose les soldats britanniques aux fermiers hollandais au début de ce siècle en Afrique australe.
19h00 - Le Journal.
19h15 - Histoire de l'art. Série documentaire.

18h00 - "Destination Santé". Magazine médical, consacré cette semaine à l'allergie.
19h00 - Le Journal.
19h15 - "Carnet de notes". Extraits de musique classique.

CINEMA

Jazz. Dans le cadre de son cycle consacré au Jazz, le Centre Américain présente cette semaine «High Society», (comédie musicale de Cole Porter, avec le grand Louis Armstrong, Grace Kelly et Bing Crosby), «Live at the Village Vanguard» et «Cotton Club» (de Francis Ford Coppola). Centre Américain, respectivement les dimanches 6 janvier à 19h, jeudi 8 à 16h30 et jeudi 10 à 19h.

L'Argent. Film de Robert Bresson avec Christian Patey sorti en 1983. La puissance malféique de l'argent conduit un délinquant à tuer à nouveau, des sa sortie de prison. Centre Culturel Français, le lundi 7 janvier à 20h.

Quelle histoire!

Boris en Terre Promise (fin)

[Boris était fils unique d'une famille moyenne vivant dans une banlieue de Moscou. Il pratiquait le karaté et rêvait de liberté. A l'école, il fit la connaissance de Sarah, fille d'un couple juif. Elle le persuada de présenter une demande de visa pour Israël. Après trois années d'études universitaires d'hébreu et de langues orientales, ils atterrirent, en juillet 1990, en «Terre Promise». Aussitôt arrivé, il dut subir une opération de circoncision, et travailler dur.]

Début août, ce fut le grand émoi. L'Irak venait d'envahir le Koweït et menaçait de détruire Israël. La terreur de la guerre en général et de la guerre chimique en particulier s'installait peu à peu dans le cœur de tous les Israéliens.

«J'étais bien à Moscou!», pensait l'infortuné Boris avec regret. Mais en réponse aux lettres affolées que lui envoyait sa pauvre mère et dans lesquelles elle lui demandait de rentrer immédiatement, il crânait pour essayer de la rassurer. Elle semblait d'ailleurs ignorer qu'il ne pouvait plus rentrer chez lui car, en émigrant en Israël, il avait perdu à jamais sa nationalité soviétique.

Il avait bien envie de quitter Israël, mais où aller? Il n'avait pas d'argent. Il eut suivi pris comme un rat. Je dois gagner du pognon pour pouvoir m'échapper.» finit-il par décider.

Il devait bien exister des moyens de se faire du fric dans ce sacré pays! Mais Boris n'avait aucune expérience. Tout ce qu'il savait faire c'était du karaté.

«Ca peut servir», lui confia un camarade de classe. Certains groupes religieux embauchent, comme gardes du corps, des gens costauds prêts à la bagarre.»

Avant même de terminer ses cours d'initiation, Boris se mit en contact avec l'un de ces groupes qui se réclamaient des anciens Zéloles.

Les Zéloles, racontait-on, avaient préféré se suicider plutôt que de se rendre aux armées de l'Empereur romain Titus qui assiégeait Jérusalem: ils ne pouvaient pas, prétendaient-ils, supporter de voir de leurs propres yeux le temple détruit.

Ce groupe, qui se faisait appeler «Les Garants du Temple» s'était mis en tête de bâtir immédiatement le troisième temple de Jérusalem, au même emplacement que celui où le roi Salomon avait érigé le premier. Celui-ci, ayant été détruit par le Babylonnien Nabuchodonosor, avait été rebâti au même emplacement par Zorabel, après le retour de Babylone. Le deuxième temple avait été lui-même détruit par les armées de Titus en l'an 70 de notre ère. Il n'en restait qu'une partie du mur ouest: le Mur des

Lamentations. Néanmoins, un ennui majeur s'opposait au dessein de la secte: sur l'esplanade où les deux temples étaient supposés avoir existé se dressaient, depuis plus de 1.400 ans, deux mosquées érigées à l'emplacement de l'atterrissage présumé du Prophète à Jérusalem après son voyage nocturne au ciel. Par la suite, cet emplacement avait été considéré comme le troisième lieu saint de l'Islam, après la Mecque et Médine.

Quand Boris se présenta chez le Grand Rabin des «Garants du Temple», celui-ci fut impressionné par sa stature et par l'enthousiasme qu'il sut montrer concernant la nécessité de reconstruire immédiatement le troisième temple: il fut immédiatement embauché à mille cinq cent dollars par mois, nets de tout impôt ou charge (une vraie aubaine pour Boris!). Son travail devait consister à accompagner (avec quelques autres gardes) des membres du groupe; dans leurs visites fréquentes au Mur des Lamentations et à les protéger pendant qu'ils faisaient des fouilles ou des travaux autour de ce mur. «Vous serez armé d'une matraque et d'une mitraillette; vous devrez les utiliser aussitôt que vous vous sentirez menacés», lui ordonna le Grand Rabin.

Boris n'avait jamais été encore dans les territoires occupés. Au centre où il apprenait l'hébreu, on avait fait comprendre aux nouveaux immigrés que les Arabes avaient pris de force la terre d'Israël et ne voulaient pas en sortir: au contraire, ils faisaient exprès de faire beaucoup de gosses pour prendre la place des pauvres Juifs de la Diaspora!

On ajoutait que si un Arabe constatait qu'il n'avait pas plus d'une demi-douzaine d'enfants, il prenait immédiatement une autre femme pour lui faire encore plus de rejetons. Beaucoup d'Arabes avaient plus d'une dizaine de gosses, alors que les familles juives n'en avaient pas plus de deux en moyenne. Certains Arabes en avaient même plus de vingt car leur religion leur permettait d'épouser quatre femmes! Devant cette situation, qui allait en empirant de jour en jour, la solution était ou bien de décimer les Arabes ou bien de les chasser de la Terre Promise, par la force ou par tout autre moyen.

En outre, les Garants du Temple croyaient ferme que les Musulmans, dont les lieux saints étaient au Hedjaz, avaient fait exprès d'inventer l'histoire du voyage nocturne du Prophète au Ciel et de son passage durant ce voyage à Jérusalem, pour s'approprier l'emplacement du Temple. Il fallait donc démolir complètement les deux mosquées pour pouvoir reconstruire le Temple. Alors, et alors seulement, se réaliserait le royaume de Jéhova.

Boris avait appris par ailleurs que les Garants du Temple avaient en fait essayé à plusieurs reprises de démolir lesdites mosquées. Leurs tentatives, dont la plus spectaculaire avait consisté à mettre le feu à la mosquée d'Al-Aqsa le 21 août 1988, avaient toutes plus ou moins échoué, grâce à la vigilance des Arabes.

Les Garants du Temple commençaient à s'impatienter du retard que prenait la nation juive à réaliser le royaume de Jéhova. Ils annonçaient que, coûte que coûte, et sans plus tarder, ils allaient commencer la construction du troisième temple, et décideraient d'en poser la première pierre le lundi 8 octobre 1990. Par voie de presse, de tracts et de placards publicitaires, ils invitèrent tous les Juifs à assister à cette cérémonie mémorable.

Les Arabes, avertis par ladite publicité, décidèrent de défendre leurs lieux saints. Lorsque les Juifs commencèrent à affluer dans la cour du Mur des Lamentations, plusieurs centaines de personnes, pour la plupart de jeunes adolescents ainsi qu'un groupe de femmes, les attendaient de pied ferme. La presse naturellement n'avait pas raté le rendez-vous.

L'échauffourée débuta vers 10h30 du matin, lorsqu'une bombe lacrymogène explosa brusquement près du groupe des femmes arabes. Les Arabes, en riposte, se mirent à lancer des pierres sur les Juifs réunis près du Mur des Lamentations. Boris, voyant les pierres venir, dégringola sa mitraillette et se mit à tirer à l'aveuglette. Plusieurs gosses tombèrent à une vingtaine de mètres devant lui. Lorsque son chargeur fut vidé, il fut entraîné par l'un des membres de la secte car les tireurs d'élite de l'armée israélienne, postés en haut des murs d'enceinte de l'esplanade, étaient entrés en action.

Le soir, Boris se vit en action sur le petit écran au cours du journal télévisé. Il vit aussi, au premier plan, les yeux innocents et étonnés d'un gosse d'une dizaine d'années en train de s'écrouler, touché par les balles meurtrières de sa mitraillette. Hanté par les yeux du gosse, Boris ne put fermer l'œil cette nuit-là. Après s'être longtemps retourné dans son lit, il prit sa décision. Il se leva, griffonna quelques mots sur une feuille de papier, chargea sa mitraillette et se tira plusieurs balles dans la bouche.

Les enquêteurs trouveront la note laissée par Boris. Il y était écrit: «Père, Mère, pardonnez-moi! Je révais de Liberté et de Justice; j'ai fini par devenir un assassin!».**

Pourtant, la conclusion du constat dressé par la police fut la suivante: «Tout porte à croire que la victime s'est tuée accidentellement en nettoyant son arme à feu.»

Sabri Farah

Les disparus de l'année

JANVIER

12: Charles HERNU, 66 ans, ancien ministre français de la Défense.
20: Barbara STANWYCK, 82 ans, actrice américaine.
25: Ava GARDNER, 67 ans, actrice américaine.

FEBVRIER

17: Jean-Marc BOIVIN, 39 ans, alpiniste français.
23: Michael POWELL, 84 ans, cinéaste britannique.
23: Napoleon DUARTE, 64 ans, ancien président Salvadorien.
24: Malcom FORBES, 70 ans, milliardaire américain.
25: Sandro PERTINI, 94 ans, ancien président de la République italienne.

MARS

12: Philippe SOUPAULT, 92 ans, écrivain français, l'un des fondateurs du surréalisme.
15: Farzad BAZOFT, 31 ans, journaliste britannique d'origine iranienne, condamné à mort et exécuté à Bagdad.
24: Alice SAPRITCH, 73 ans, comédienne française.

AVRIL

3: Sarah VAUGHAN, 66 ans, chanteuse de Jazz américaine.
15: Greta GARBO, 84 ans, actrice américaine.
23: Paulette GODDARD, 78 ans, actrice américaine, épouse et partenaire de Chaplin.
25: Dexter GORDON, 67 ans, saxophoniste américain.
30: Antoine VITEZ, 59 ans, comédien et metteur en scène français, administrateur de la Comédie Française.

MAI

16: Jim HENSON, 53 ans, marionnettiste américain, créateur du «Muppet Show».
16: Sammy DAVIS Jr, 64 ans, homme de spectacle américain.
29: Yves BRAYER, 82 ans, peintre français.

JUIN

29: Ivring WALLACE, 74 ans, écrivain américain.

JUILLET

10: André CHAPEL, 52 ans, cuisinier français.
15: Oleg KAGAN, 44 ans, violoniste soviétique.
20: Sergueï PARADJANOV, 66 ans, cinéaste soviétique.
21: Sacha PITOEFF, 70 ans, comédien et metteur en scène français.
29: Bruno KREISKY, 79 ans, ancien chancelier autrichien.

AOUT

7: Jacques SOUSTELLE, 78 ans, ancien ministre, ethnologue et académicien.

SEPTEMBRE

4: Irène DUNNE, 88 ans, vedette d'Hollywood des années 30 et 40.
5: Lord CARADON, 82 ans, ancien secrétaire d'Etat au Foreign Office, l'homme de la décolonisation britannique.
9: Samuel Kanyon DOE, 38 ans, président du Libéria.
26: Alberto MORAVIA, 83 ans, écrivain italien.
30: Patrick WHITE, 78 ans, écrivain australien. Prix Nobel de littérature en 1973.

OCTOBRE

3: Stefano CASIRAGHI, 30 ans, époux de la princesse Caroline de Monaco.
14: Léonard BERNSTEIN, 72 ans, compositeur et chef d'orchestre américain.
15: Delphine SEYRIG, 58 ans, actrice française.
21: Dany CHAMOUN, 56 ans, responsable politique chrétien libanais, assassiné à Beyrouth.
22: Louis ALTHUSSER, 72 ans, philosophe français.
27: Ugo TOGNAZZI, 68 ans, acteur italien.

NOVEMBRE

5: Raymond OLIVER, 81 ans, cuisinier français.
5: Rabbim Meir KAHANE, 58 ans, dirigeant israélien du mouvement raciste anti-arabe Kach, assassiné à New-York.
7: Lawrence DURELL, 78 ans, écrivain britannique.

DECEMBRE

1er: Pierre DUX, 82 ans, comédien et metteur en scène français.
7: Reinaldo ARENAS, 47 ans, romancier cubain exilé aux Etats-Unis.
14: Friedrich DURENMATT, 69 ans, écrivain suisse.

Factory orders plummet

U.S. unemployment reaches highest level since June '87

WASHINGTON (R) — Unemployment in the United States reached its highest level in three and a half years in December, and U.S. factory orders plunged by a record amount in November, the government reported Friday, showing a nation in the grips of recession.

The jobless rate jumped to 6.1 per cent from 5.9 per cent in November. Payrolls outside the farm sector declined by 76,000 last month, led by strong losses in manufacturing and retailing, the U.S. Labour Department said.

Since September, the faltering U.S. economy has shed half a million jobs — its steepest drop since the end of 1982 recession.

It takes six straight months of decline in the nation's output of goods and services, as measured by gross national product, to declare recession.

Most economists, and now even the White House, believe the contraction began late last year.

June 1987 was the last time unemployment reached these levels when it was 6.2 per cent,

the department said. Underscoring the economic contraction, the Commerce Department reported orders received by factories in November fell a record 5.9 per cent after October's 2.5 per cent rise.

Hardest hit was demand for long-lasting, big-ticket goods such as airplanes, cars and washing machines, which typically suffer in tough economic times and account for about half the index. Orders for these durable items fell by 10.7 per cent, reversing October's 3.6 per cent climb.

Robert Dederick, chief economist at Northern Trust Co., said the reports confirm his view that U.S. economic activity declined 3.0 per cent or more in the final months of 1990.

The dollar rose and U.S. treasury securities tumbled on release of the unemployment report. Although the jobless rate matched analysts' predictions, the payroll decline was smaller than the 150,000 loss they on average predicted and was well below November's steep 259,000 loss.

But economists said nothing in the employment report mitigates the recessionary outlook.

"We don't believe we are going to reach the trough (of the recession) until the spring," said Gordon Richards, economist at the National Association of Manufacturers.

Payrolls have declined at a recessionary level of 150,000 on average the past two months, said Dederick. The better than expected December figure was distorted by rehiring of 22,000 temporarily laid-off carworkers, who saw 55,000 layoffs the prior month, he said.

Employment in the car sector remains seriously depressed. About 55,000 jobs have been lost since last June, said Janet Norwood, commissioner of the U.S. Bureau of Labour Statistics. Overall, the manufacturing sector lost 33,000 jobs in December on top of 204,000 in November.

This steady deterioration showed up in the transportation equipment sector of factory orders, which was down 27.6 per cent in November after October's 14.1 per cent gain.

Iraqi parliament approves war budget

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraq's parliament approved a 1991 budget based on the assumption that the U.N. economic blockade would stand for the rest of the year.

Baghdad's official newspapers disclosed Friday that the budget had been passed but with the threat of imminent war in the Gulf they provided even less information than usual on government spending plans.

Saadoun Hammadi, a deputy prime minister and head of the economic committee, told parliament the budget was "basically set to consolidate the combat potential of the armed forces." Hammadi said the budget had been drawn up on the assumption that the economic blockade imposed by the U.N. Security Council over Iraq's invasion of Kuwait "will continue to the end of this year and that Iraq will continue not to pay its arrears and debts."

He gave no figures but said his committee had approved all the extra expenditure suggested by the defence ministry which surpassed last year's budget.

Hammadi said the budget was aimed at "assuring the lowest level of the people's requirement for consumed materials and to stop inflation as much as possible."

There are no official figures for inflation which has risen sharply, especially since imposition of U.N. sanctions.

Hammadi said the budget also aimed at providing foodstuffs and trying to build-up Iraq's strategic stockpile. Basic foods have been rationed in Iraq since September.

On measures to curb inflation, he said the government would consider increasing prices of non-essential goods, speed up the sale of government properties, reduce government spending as much as possible and curb lending.

He said the government would continue its policy of allowing people to import goods from their own savings of hard currency abroad.

Agriculture Minister Abdul Wahab Mahmoud told parliament that wheat and barley crops would probably satisfy domestic needs in the coming year.

London insurance underwriters have sharply raised war risk premiums for ships sailing into the Gulf, and those still offering cover expect further increases during the run up to the Jan. 15 deadline for Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait.

One underwriter said rates had quadrupled for some destinations, and that Jubail in Saudi Arabia, where much of the U.S. weaponry is being landed, was one of the most expensive areas.

The market now treats hull premiums for oil tankers and dry cargo vessels destined for most areas in and around the Gulf according to "held-covered" status, meaning that underwriters are not prepared to quote a rate until there is an application.

Gulf crisis inhibits Amman Financial Market activities

By Samir Shafiq
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Gulf crisis has so badly battered the Amman Financial Market (AFM) that not only record gains posted during the first seven months of 1990 were wiped out, but heavy losses plagued the market during the remaining five months of last year.

The sharp reverse which started with the Gulf crisis in August 1990 caused year trading to plunge 26.9 per cent as the total volume for 1990 stood at JD 268.9 million compared to JD 367.6 million registered in 1989. The figures translate into a daily average of JD 1.1 million, a drop of 27.4 per cent from 1989 daily average of JD 1.5 million.

The figures, revealed Friday in a press conference held by Acting General Manager Ibrahim Bilbeisi, also showed a 30.4 per cent decline in the number of shares traded during last year as it fell to 136.1 million shares from 195.6 million recorded in 1989. The daily average as such was 546,402 shares, down 31 per cent from 791,977 shares in 1989.

The number of contracts concluded during 1990 totalled 157,129 compared to 210,484

contracts executed in 1989, resulting in a 25.3 per cent fall. The daily average was 631 and 851 contracts for 1989 and 1990 respectively.

Trading in bonds was extremely low as only JD 3.1 million worth of bonds changed hands last year, a drop of 85.9 per cent from the 1989 total of JD 22.2 million. The number of bonds amounted to 198,856 and 658,652 for the two years respectively.

Share trading related to inheritance, family transfers and other similar transactions, which are excluded from floor trading, stood at 5.6 million shares valued at JD 17.8 million in 1990 compared to 62.7 million shares valued at JD 164.9 million in 1989... a decline of 91.1 per cent and 89.2 per cent respectively.

Prices as measured by the general index tumbled from a high 1989 close of 157.3 points to end 1990 18.9 points lower at 118.4. The 13.8 per cent decline has resulted after the general index peaked at 135.7 points at the end of July.

Sectorally, industrial shares went down 18.5 points (12 per cent); financial shares dropped 22.9 points (13.2 per cent); service shares were hit by a

14.4 point decline (14.3 per cent) and insurance shares lost 20.6 points or 15.6 per cent.

Breaking 1990 into two periods, the activity at the AFM during the first seven months was running at a record high that eclipsed the comparative period of 1989.

The total volume, number of shares and contracts executed by the end of July 1990 were respectively JD 228 million, 113.9 million shares and 122,070 contracts compared to JD 187.4 million, 106.4 million shares and 112,284 contracts registered at the end of July 1989. The figures translate into a respective increase of 21.7 per cent, seven per cent and 8.7 per cent.

The 1990 August-December period witnessed a fall out from JD 161.6 million in the same months of 1989 to JD 40.9 million, a drop of 74.7 per cent in the volume of trade. The number of shares plunged by 71.6 per cent from 78.0 million shares to 22.2 million shares while the number of contracts went down by 60.6 per cent from 89,078 contracts to 35,059 contracts.

The adverse political and economic climate affected the AFM trading in varied forms. In terms of daily average

volume, the services sector was the hardest hit, followed by the industrial, insurance and financial sectors, while in terms of prices the insurance sector suffered the most decline. It was followed respectively by the industrial, financial and services sector.

Highlighting the impact of the Gulf crisis, the first seven months of 1990 recorded an average daily trading volume in industrial shares of JD 824,770 while the volume dropped to JD 203,409 in the five months after with the general price index for industry retreating 20.2 points.

Similarly, the average daily trading volume in financial shares tumbled from JD 399,999 in the first seven months to JD 129,307 in the next period with the general price index for the financial sector falling 19.9 points.

In services, the drop was 85.6 per cent from a daily average of JD 321,392 to JD 46,268 with the index going down 11.4 points.

In the primary market, the amount registered in new issues fell from a year end total of JD 51.2 million in 1989 to JD 34.5 million in 1990 while new debentures stood at JD 6 million in 1990 compared to JD 5 million in the preceding year.

War talk re-routes air traffic in Middle East

LONDON (R) — Rumblings of war in the Gulf have forced many international airlines to re-route flights to the Middle East as insurance firms increase their premiums and passenger figures fluctuate.

Leading airlines in Europe, the Middle East and Asia have changed their schedules because of the risk of war if Iraq does not meet the U.N. Security Council's Jan. 15 deadline for a full withdrawal from Kuwait.

In Bahrain, local and foreign airlines said flights out of the Gulf were fully booked until Jan. 15. Gulf Air, owned by Bahrain, Oman, Abu Dhabi and Qatar, has added extra flights to London, 10 to Bombay, and three to Karachi in the build-up to the U.N. deadline.

Saudi Arabian airlines also planned more flights in the next week but has not released details. British Airways, the biggest foreign airline in the area, plans five additional Gulf flights until Jan. 15.

But British Airways said it was reducing its scheduled services to and from Tel Aviv, Israel, from six to four a week from Jan. 15.

A spokeswoman for America's Pan Am said insurance costs had increased ten-fold, to \$162,500 per flight to Riyadh. With costs so high, she said, "it was simply no longer economically feasible to continue the service (to Riyadh)."

Pan Am also cancelled flights to Tel Aviv after insurance rates rose twenty-fold to about \$65,000 a flight.

Dutch KLM scrapped its once-a-week flight from Amsterdam to Amman because of fewer

passengers and said it was also temporarily cutting one of four flights a week from Amsterdam to Tel Aviv.

Scandinavian Airlines System also said it would stop flying to Tel Aviv, its only Middle East destination, from Jan. 9 until further notice because of insurance costs.

Some airlines, such as Swissair, have imposed surcharges on Gulf routes because of the expensive insurance.

Hong Kong flag carrier Cathay Pacific Airways said Friday it was suspending its daily flight to London via Bahrain from Jan. 11 until the Gulf crisis was resolved.

Sri Lanka's Air Lanka plans to re-route flights to Europe via the Soviet Union to avoid the Middle East if war breaks out in the Gulf.

"The airline has made arrangements to reroute all its European flights... avoiding the entire Middle East territory and overflying the USSR in the event of war breaking out," Air Lanka said in a statement.

Other airlines, including Italy's Alitalia and Olympic Airways of Greece, do not plan to change their schedules to the Middle East immediately, but stressed they were closely monitoring the situation. Austrian Airlines has set up a crisis committee to examine the situation.

Egypt, a leading Arab partner in the anti-Iraq alliance, said Friday it's national carrier would not suspend flights to the Gulf despite the threat of war.

"The company's flights to Middle East countries and Arab Gulf countries will not stop un-

less they stop incoming flights by closing their airspace in case of war," Egyptian Chairman Mohammad Fahim Rayan told Al Akbar newspaper.

Fahim said Egyptair could cope with a two-month war in the Gulf, but if hostilities persisted longer than that the airline would have to turn to the government for help.

Iraq's state-owned airline, Iraqi Airways, has lost millions of dollars from the international blockade against Iraq because of its invasion of Kuwait.

However, the airline made some profit by chartering its planes to return hostages. Last month an airline official said Iraqi Airways had laid on 40 charters since the Gulf crisis began in August. Iraq refused foreign airlines permission to transport the hostages home.

London insurance underwriters have sharply raised war risk premiums for ships sailing into the Gulf, and those still offering cover expect further increases during the run up to the Jan. 15 deadline for Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait.

One underwriter said rates had quadrupled for some destinations, and that Jubail in Saudi Arabia, where much of the U.S. weaponry is being landed, was one of the most expensive areas.

The market now treats hull premiums for oil tankers and dry cargo vessels destined for most areas in and around the Gulf according to "held-covered" status, meaning that underwriters are not prepared to quote a rate until there is an application.

AMMAN EXCHANGE RATES			
Saturday, January 5, 1991 Central Bank official rates			
	Buy	Sell	
U.S. dollar	663.0	667.0	
Pound Sterling	1284.0	1291.7	
Deutsche mark	440.9	443.5	
Swiss franc	520.8	523.9	
French franc	129.8	130.6	
Japanese yen (for 100)	492.2	495.2	
Dutch guilder	390.9	393.2	
Swedish crown	117.6	118.3	
Italian lira (for 100)	58.6	59.0	
Belgian franc (for 10)	214.0	215.3	

MOSCOW (R) — The Soviet trading bloc Comecon, a victim of eastern Europe's rush to the free market, announced its dissolution Saturday amid preparations for a new, more modern trade organisation.

It said in a communique the group's executive committee had approved plans to create a new market-oriented body. Formal approval by all nine Comecon members is expected in Budapest late next month.

"The executive committee agreed with the proposals for the radical overhaul of the system of economic cooperation by member states, including a draft for a new organisation," the communique said.

The new body would be known as the Organisation for International Economic Cooperation, it said. The new group is expected to help the nine members — the Soviet Union, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Mongolia, Poland, Romania, Cuba and Vietnam — better integrate their economies with the West following the collapse of communist central planning over the past year.

Moves towards the market and lack of interest in the Soviet rouble had reduced Comecon, whose modern office tower stands perched on the Moscow river, into little more than a glorified bazaar with members haggling over complex barter deals.

Comecon, founded in 1949

and formally called the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, started trading on a hard currency basis Jan. 1, instead of the nominal "transferable rouble." Trade will also be based on world prices this year.

"(Comecon) has exhausted its possibilities but the economic 'space' of its member countries is not a myth, but reality," the Soviet news agency TASS said in a report of the new move.

"This must be taken into account and so it is not worth breaking the economic ties built up among them," TASS said.

It quoted Hungarian minister of foreign trade, Bela Kadar, chairman of the executive committee, as saying the members had narrowed their differences enough to approve the draft documents ahead of next month's full session. TASS gave no details.

Members agreed to invite Yugoslavia and Germany — which absorbed former Comecon member East Germany — to the Budapest meeting. TASS said.

The trading bloc was also considering possible observer status for the European Community and Albania, which left Comecon in 1961 but has expressed interest in strengthening its foreign economic ties.

The Soviet Communist Party daily Pravda said earlier this week that Comecon had been going through a deep crisis.

"The move by Comecon members towards market economies exposed serious defects in this international economic organisation... the bulky, bureaucratic structures of Comecon have become legendary," it said.

TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

Jordanian-Syrian Land Transport Co. Invites
Contractors to participate in tender No. 1/91 for supply of spare parts for its Mercedes trucks type (L&LS 2624) as per part numbers and quantities attached with terms of tender.

Contractors wishing to bid for tender can obtain copies of tender documents from the company in Jabal Al-Hussein — behind Ministry of Health — opposite Al-Fadel Ibn Abbas Mosque - Amman for a non-refundable fee of JD 160,000 (One hundred and sixty Jordan Dinars) per a copy, bearing official documents proving their registration in records of trading agents.

Offers should be submitted not later than 2.30 p.m. (local Jordan Time) on Wednesday February 6th, 1991.

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Chairman/General Manager

Jordan Times
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HAYA CULTURAL CENTER ANNOUNCES

The start of membership registration for children for the year 1991 for activities in the arts & crafts, library, computer, competitions, the museum & other games & activities.

Courses are given in gymnastics, music, ballet, taiwando & Arabic calligraphy. Special computer & painting courses for the holiday.

For registration visit Haya Center or phone 665195/6.

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3. Secretary with ability in English, shorthand, and proficiency in Arabic/English typing, word processor and general office machines.

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P.O. Box 930184, Amman

Applications to include details of education, training and experience, and one photograph.

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(Arabic)

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Cinema **CONCORD** Tel: 677420

POLICE ACADEMY "6"

Show: 3:30, 5:15, 6:45, 8:30, 10:30

Cinema **PHILADELPHIA** Tel: 634144

HER ALIBI

Show: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

Cinema **NIJOM** Tel: 675571

The Savages

Show: 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30
Friday & Sunday extra show at 11:00 a.m.

Cinema **PLAZA** Tel: 699238

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Latvians end printing plant standoff, but troops remain

RIGA, USSR (Agencies) — Printers and journalists occupying Latvia's largest printing plant have decided to quit their jobs rather than submit to Communist Party control at the presses they had hoped would become independent.

The decision appeared to end the most tense confrontation in months in the three Baltic republics, all of which have declared sovereignty or independence from the Kremlin.

Leaders in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia have expressed more fear lately that force would be used to quash their independence drives.

In Norway, Lithuanian President Vytautas Landsbergis said the standoff in Latvia was a sign of things to come.

"There is a sneaking occupation underway, and in the first phase the central authorities aim to destroy the free press," he said, according to the Norwegian News Agency NTB.

Meanwhile, Soviet Army Chief of Staff Mikhail Moiseyev met with Latvian President Anatoly Gorbunov Friday. After the meeting he said the number of troops in the Baltics would not increase and could be reduced, according to the Soviet News Agency TASS.

Landsbergis was in Oslo for meetings with Norwegian Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland and other officials. Later the Norwegian government announced the Nordic countries planned to open information offices in the Baltic republics.

The standoff started after the journalists occupied the Press House printing plant Wednesday in an attempt to make it independent. The troops arrived Wednesday and took control of the building.

The majority of the estimated 600 press workers and 700 journalists who work at Press House voted early Friday to leave the building, said journalists Alexander Gutman. They decided to try to find work elsewhere in Latvia.

Hundreds of people filed out of the building after about 40 Interior Ministry troops ordered them to leave. The troops remained on patrol after nightfall.

Latvia's pro-independence government agreed to provide compensation to the workers while they look for new jobs and to help the newspapers based in the building set up new offices elsewhere in Riga.

The streets around the towering press house were nearly deserted Friday, in stark contrast to Wednesday, when demonstrators demanded the Communist Party relinquish its control.

About a half-dozen Interior Ministry jeeps Friday were parked around the building on the banks of the Daugava River to prevent anyone from approaching the building.

The pro-Kremlin Latvian Communist Party had asked the Interior Ministry to send in the special troops and said they would remain "until their task has been fulfilled," said Vladimir Sirdukov, an adviser to Latvian Communist chief Alfred Rubiks.

They party is "efficiently exercising the management of the party property and will oppose any illegal attempts to restrict these functions," they party said in a statement.

Sirdukov said the request was based on an Oct. 12 decree by Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev for the protection of government property against nationalist acts.

TASS Friday accused the U.S. State Department of interfering in Soviet internal affairs and heightening tension in the Baltic republics.

TASS observer Dmitry Yakubov said a statement Thursday by U.S. spokesman Richard Boucher, describing this week's seizure of the publishing plant in Latvia as provocative, evoked "perplexity and even indignation."

Boucher expressed concern that the seizure of the plant by Interior Ministry troops could fan unrest.

3 Italian policemen shot dead

ROME (R) — Three members of Italy's paramilitary police were shot dead Friday in an ambush while patrolling a poor area of Bologna to prevent attacks against homeless immigrants, police said.

Security forces set up roadblocks and launched a manhunt after the shooting, reminiscent of political violence which shook Italy between 1969 and 1984.

Initial reports said the three were killed after rubbish bins were strewn across the path of their car, blocking it in one of the city's most depressed areas.

A group of unidentified gunmen then riddled the patrol car with bullets.

Police said the three police officers apparently had no time to shoot back at their assailants.

The paramilitary Carabinieri have been ordered to patrol the area to protect poor immigrants, who have been sleeping in cars and in an abandoned school.

Security for immigrants was stepped up in Bologna after Christmas when gunmen opened fire on a caravan camp in the suburbs, killing two gypsies.

Responsibility for this attack has been claimed by various "keep-Italy-white" groups, embarrassing authorities in Bologna which is a traditionally Communist stronghold in central Italy.

Racist violence has increased in Italy over the past year, particularly in depressed areas. There are estimated to be 750,000 illegal immigrants in the country.

Khmer Rouge claims capture of town

BANGKOK (R) — Cambodian guerrillas said Saturday they had taken a strategic town, cutting off a provincial capital controlled by the Phnom Penh government.

Khmer Rouge radio said the district seat of Chong Kal, 45 kilometres from the Thai border in northern Cambodia, was attacked just before dawn Friday.

"After 20 minutes of battle, we destroyed and completely liberated the district township," it said.

The town is on Route 68, the only road that links the Phnom Penh forces in the provincial capital of Samraong with their comrades to the south.

Forces loyal to Prince Norodom Sihanouk joined in the attack, according to their radio station.

"Combatants from the 5th Brigade attacked a position... in Chong Kal district, Oddar Meanchey province," it said. "In the attack, 36 enemy soldiers were killed."

Both radio reports were monitored by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC).

The Khmer Rouge, responsible for a million deaths in Cambodia between 1975 and 1978, and their Sihanoukist allies have fought the Vietnamese-installed government in Phnom Penh for 12 years.

The battlefield claims that come out of Cambodia cannot be independently confirmed.

Meanwhile the Phnom Penh government has a list of 12 leaders of the radical Khmer Rouge guerrilla group who will not be allowed back into the capital under any circumstances, a senior official says.

The list includes Khieu Samphan and Son Sen, members of the Supreme National Council (SNC) that is supposed to represent Cambodian sovereignty under a U.N. plan designed to end 12 years of civil war.

Those on the list will "never be allowed to return to Phnom Penh," Vice Foreign Minister Phyl Thach said in an interview earlier this week.

Salvador rebels propose independent autopsy of airmen

LOLOTIQUE, El Salvador (AP) — U.S. investigators who examined the bodies of three U.S. airmen killed when leftist rebels downed their helicopter indicated two crew members were shot, but it was unclear whether they were executed.

A final autopsy report, expected this weekend, could give further clues on State Department claims the two crewmen survived the crash Wednesday but were slain by guerrillas, who have waged an 11-year civil war against the U.S.-backed government.

The rebel Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) demanded an independent autopsy, claiming the men were found alive in the wreckage of the Huey helicopter but died minutes later.

They also claimed the rebels fired on the aircraft after its crew shot at them.

That version differed from a rebel communiqué Thursday that made no mention of gunfire from the aircraft but said the guerrillas did not know they were shooting down a U.S. copter.

The outcome of the autopsy report by the U.S. army forensic team could have a bearing on \$42.5 million in U.S. aid to the Salvadoran military, funding that was suspended by the U.S. Congress last year.

President George Bush has the authority to restore it under certain conditions and is expected to make a decision next week.

Meanwhile, a Salvadoran helicopter with two U.S. army investigators aboard was hit by gunfire Friday as the aircraft was leaving the crash site, about 120 kilometres east of San Salvador, the U.S. embassy quoted an

Colombian rebels bring offensive to capital

BOGOTA (AP) — Leftist guerrillas, carrying out one of their largest offensives, have brought their fight to the capital for the first time in years, police said Friday.

Roving rebel bands attacked three police stations with automatic weapons and small bombs late Thursday in southern Bogota, a police spokesman said.

He said one policeman was killed and another was wounded in the attacks.

The violence is part of an extensive rebel offensive in which 30 policemen and soldiers have been killed in the first four days of this year.

Over the past 25 years, more than 75,000 people have died in rebel attacks.

In the new wave of violence, guerrillas of the Armed Revolutionary Forces of Colombia, known as FARC, have been retreating for the army's capture in early December of their jungle headquarters in southern Colombia.

Since New Year's Eve, FARC and another rebel group, the pro-Cuban National Liberation Army, have carried out at least 32 attacks, according to media reports and officials.

FARC and the National Liberation Army are the only major guerrilla groups still fighting the army. The M-19 rebels gave up their armed struggle nearly a year ago and formed a political party.

Bush selects Yeutter as party chairman

WASHINGTON (AP) — President George Bush has selected Agriculture Secretary Clayton Yeutter as national chairman of the Republican Party, sources said Friday.

In a brief press conference on the White House lawn, Bush refused to respond directly to a question on his choice, but administration and congressional sources said Yeutter had been offered the post and had accepted it.

Yeutter, 60, a farmer and one-time chairman of the Chicago Merchants Exchange, served as U.S. trade representative in the Reagan administration. He has been agriculture secretary since the beginning of the Bush administration in January 1989.

Bush was asked about the party vacancy at a news conference outside the White House as he prepared to leave for Camp David, Maryland.

Asked if he had selected Yeutter, Bush said: "He'd be very good wouldn't he? Next question."

When pressed further, Bush said elusively, "you're pinning me down too much on that."

Yeutter was at the White House Friday afternoon.

The Republican National Committee will meet on Jan. 25 to elect a successor to Lee Atwater, disabled since last spring with a brain tumor.

The party seemed certain to ratify Bush's choice, which caps a weeks-long search that proved embarrassing at times for the president and his party.

Former drug policy director William Bennett was Bush's first choice to succeed Atwater. But two weeks after agreeing to accept the job, Bennett changed his mind, citing potential financial conflicts.

Kohl's vision of new German military on hold

BONN (AP) — Germany has put on hold for the duration of the Gulf crisis plans to remove constitutional restraints that have limited its military to domestic and NATO jobs since World War II.

Although there are various interpretations, the constitution generally states the military can only be used to defend Germany or to help protect a NATO ally.

"The government still intends to get this change passed by parliament," said Dieter Vogel, a spokesman for Chancellor Helmut Kohl. "But it could take a while."

Karsten Voigt, foreign policy spokesman for the opposition Social Democrats, says his party and Kohl's coalition agree there will be no moves to change the constitution during the crisis.

"Discussing this now would produce a decisively negative echo among the populace. People would see this as a step toward participating in a military action in the Gulf," Voigt said.

Germany has not remained completely aloof from the crisis. Kohl has consented to include 18 fighter-bombers along with planes from Belgium and Italy to help protect fellow NATO member Turkey, a frontline state against Iraq in the Gulf crisis.

But Kohl's government has ordered the planes be used only if Iraq attacks Turkey, and only with express permission from Bonn.

Government officials have reassured the German public there are no signs that Iraq would invade Turkey, and promised the token deployment will not lead to a greater Gulf commitment.

Germany also has pledged 3.3 billion marks (\$2.2 billion) in financial support for the allied forces arrayed against Iraq and is sending aid such as armoured vehicles specialising in counter-chemical warfare, water trucks and transport vessels to move supplies.

Some U.S. congressmen have criticised Germany as lagging behind NATO allies like Britain.

Kohl has been assuring Washington that united Germany will take on a greater global role, and the Gulf crisis has made his countrymen increasingly convinced they should not.

A new survey by the Infratest Polling Institute shows the intensity of German aversion to international military involvement.

Of 1,936 Germans questioned, 75 per cent said Germany should stay out of international military conflicts, according to Infratest whose survey was published Friday by the Sued-

Fire bombs ravage N. Ireland shops

BELFAST (Agencies) — Suspected IRA fire bomb attacks on a dozen Northern Ireland stores caused millions of pounds worth of damage, police said Saturday.

No one was hurt but the Friday night attacks ravaged eight stores in Belfast and four more in the nearby town of Lisburn.

A police spokesman said the Irish Republican Army (IRA), battling to oust Britain from Northern Ireland, was the prime suspect behind the attacks on department stores, fashion shops and furniture stores.

The fire bomb attacks were fiercely criticised by Northern Ireland Economy Minister Richard Needham.

"Not only will many people, old and young, from the most deprived areas who found jobs for the first time now wonder why the IRA have bombed them out of work but millions of pounds now needed to repair the damage will not be available for other projects," he said.

"How can anybody believe that one (British) soldier will be withdrawn as a result of these incidents? How does anyone believe that the cause of Ireland will be advanced one millimetre by destroying the jobs and livelihoods of the people of Northern Ireland, not least of those who require jobs the most?"

"The damage done by the IRA will not be forgotten or forgiven by the people of Northern Ireland."

Meanwhile, Patrick Sheehy, a disgraced member of the IRA, has committed suicide, IRA and news reports said Friday.

Sheehy's body, with a bullet wound to the head, was found early Wednesday outside a post office in Nenagh, county Tipperary, 160 kilometres southwest of Dublin.

A Brazilian-made Taurus pistol was found under Sheehy's body, police said Friday.

The pistol was part of an arms consignment smuggled to the IRA from Libya, Press Association, the British domestic news agency, quoted police sources as saying.

Malaysia accuses Sabah state leader of corruption

KOTA KINABALU, (R) — The chief minister of Malaysia's Sabah state, a bitter foe of Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, was arrested Saturday and charged with corruption.

Joseph Pairin Kitingan, 49, Christian leader of the timber and oil-rich state on Borneo Island since 1985, faces three charges of awarding government contracts and land to relatives.

Kitingan is president of the Christian-based Bersatu Sabah Party (PBS) which quit Mahathir's ruling coalition before last October's general election after a dispute over autonomy and oil royalties.

Mahathir accused Kitingan of stabbing him in the back and alleged that PBS leaders were inciting the people of Sabah to hate the Muslim-dominated federal government.

The chief minister was arrested at a police road block while on his way to work in the state capital, a PBS official said.

Kitingan was taken to a police station to have his statement recorded before being charged in a heavily-guarded lower court.

Kitingan was accused of awarding to relatives a 1.5 million ringgit (\$555,000) building contract, a 10.5 million ringgit (\$3.3 million) road project and 2,000 hectares (800 acres) of timber land.

The alleged offences took place in 1985 and 1987.

No plea was taken and he was released on a bail of 1.5 million ringgit.

"At this moment, I do not want to say anything," Kitingan told reporters on leaving the court. An aide later said the chief minister would continue with his duties.

"This is nothing less than harassment of the state government by federal leaders," Sabah's Deputy Chief Minister Bernard Dompok told reporters.

We expect more arrests as it is their aim to create uncertainty in the state. The federal government was never happy with us, even when we were in the ruling coalition," Dompok said.

Kitingan's arrest was the latest in a series of actions taken against Sabah leaders by the federal government.

On Friday, a senior adviser to Kitingan, Maximus Ongkili, was arrested under the internal security act which provides for detention without trial.

Four other PBS officials were also detained under the act last June accused of plotting to pull Sabah out of the 13-state Malaysian federation.

Kitingan's younger brother Jeffrey was also charged with seven counts of corruption last January involving the state-owned investment agency Sabah Foundation.

Sri Lankan troops kill rebel, 1st since ceasefire

COLOMBO (R) — Sri Lankan security forces shot dead a Tamil separatist, the first death since rebels declared a unilateral ceasefire Tuesday, military sources said Saturday.

They said the rebel, who had tried to grab a gun from a soldier guarding a bridge in the eastern Batticaloa district, was shot by another soldier early Saturday.

Responding to a unilateral ceasefire declared by the rebels, the Sri Lankan government Friday suspended offensives for one week against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), who are fighting for a separate state in the north and east.

Troops and rebels accuse each other of violating the ceasefire.

In a statement from their London office, the separatists said security forces had breached the ceasefire but had blamed the rebels for the violations.

Military sources said Saturday that the rebels attacked two army camps in the north of the island Friday.

They said rebels approached a camp at Kankesanthurai in Jaffna district Friday evening from different directions.

Chinese student leaders jailed

PEKING (R) — Chinese students who played a leading role in the 1989 pro-democracy movement were given prison sentences ranging from two to four years by a Peking court Saturday.

The official New China News Agency (NCNA) listed names of nine activists, saying some were guilty of "inciting subversion against the people's government and the overthrowing of the socialist system during the 1989 turmoil and rebellion."

Wang Youcai, a graduate from Peking University, was jailed for four years, the longest term imposed. Two students, who were said to have repented, were "exempted from criminal punishment," the agency said.

The trials were the first reported by the Chinese authorities of some of the 21 student leaders accused of organising the mass demonstrations which swept Peking from mid-April until June 4, 1989, when troops and tanks crushed the protests.

Four of those named by the New China News Agency, including Wang, were on a police list of 21 most wanted students.

Two student leaders, Zhang Ming and Ma Shaofang, were jailed for three years while the fourth, Zheng Xuguang, was sentenced to two years.

The sentences were lenient by Chinese standards.

But informed Communist Party sources who predicted the light sentences last month said that trials to be held of other alleged leaders of the democracy movement would result in harsher punishment.

China had come under considerable international pressure to release students arrested in the wake of the 1989 crackdown.

The official agency said the nine were sentenced at a public hearing attended by more than 60 local residents. Foreign reporters who requested to be present were denied access.

As well as inciting subversion, the agency said "some were guilty of organising and directing efforts to block and attack the armed forces trying to enforce martial law."

Others were guilty of "assembling crowds to disturb public traffic and seriously undermining public order," it added.

The other three activists imprisoned were named as Kong Xianfeng — jailed for three years — and Zhang Qianjin and Xue Jianan who were both given two years. It was not clear if they were all students.

The two exempted from punishment were listed as Li Yuqi and Pang Zhibing, both known to be students.

"During the hearing, the defendants made their confessions, explications and statements and their lawyers or relatives conducted defence on behalf of the defendants," the agency said.

It did not give details of individual cases.

No mention was made of Wang Dan, who heads the police list of 21 student leaders and is believed to be held in Peking's Qincheng Prison, still awaiting trial.

Brando's son pleads guilty

LOS ANGELES (R) — Christian Brando, the son of Academy Award-winning actor Marlon Brando, pleaded guilty to voluntary manslaughter in the killing of his sister's lover, Santa Monica superior court Judge Robert Thomas accepted the plea and said he would hold a sentence hearing on Feb. 26. The younger Brando had previously pleaded not guilty to a charge of murder in the death of 26-year-old Tabitha Dag Drollet, and he now faces up to 16 years in state prison on the lesser charge. Deputy district attorney Steven Barshop told Judge Thomas he would ask for the maximum sentence. Christian Brando shot Drollet, who was the boyfriend of Cheyenne Brando, after the two had a furious argument on May 16 last year at Marlon Brando's \$5 million hilltop mansion overlooking Hollywood. Christian Brando admitted to police that he shot Drollet but said it was an accident as the two struggled for a gun. A court source said Drollet's parents, who are members of prominent Tabitha families, had asked to be heard at the hearing.

3 chengs squabble over Porsche

TAIPEI (R) — Taiwan primary school student Cheng Po-Jen won a Porsche sports car in a radio station competition. The trouble is, which Cheng Po-Jen was it? Three Cheng Po-Jens at the Linpien School in southern Taiwan insist they entered the contest, newspapers said. One of them is only 11 years old and the others are also under the legal driving age. Even handwriting experts have been unable to determine which Cheng wrote the winning entry. The boys' parents have rejected the radio station's offer to sell the \$74,000 car and split the proceeds, and the case is now in the hands of the police and the newspapers said.

Milli Vanilli share 'Phoney Baloney' Award

RADNOR, Pennsylvania (AP) — Milli Vanilli shared TV Guide's "Phoney Baloney" Award and were joined by Roseanne Barr and Kathie Lee Gifford as recipients of the magazine's annual Zap Awards. TV Guide's Jan. 5 edition gives 1990 Zap Awards to the year's most memorable botches and blunders on television. Milli Vanilli, the duo of Fabrice Morvan and Rob Pilatus, admitted they never sang on their hit album and were stripped of their Best New Artist Grammy Award. They shared the "Phoney Baloney" Award with an impostor who convinced ABC-TV that he was the actor who portrayed Buckwheat in the Our Gang films. The real actor died in 1980. Gifford got a Zap — named for the action of changing TV stations by remote control — for telephoning her syndicated show, "Regis and Kathie Lee," from her hospital bed March 22 to report that she'd given birth. Barr got zapped for her screeching rendition of the National Anthem at a baseball game.

Murder hits record high in U.S.

WASHINGTON (R) — Murders hit record highs in major U.S. cities in 1990 as teenage gangs and drug dealers waged war in the streets and more and more young people turned into killers. More than 2,200 people were killed in New York City in 1990 for a new record, Washington set a record of at least 483 killings and Philadelphia, the self-proclaimed city of brotherly love, had a record 522 killings by the closing hours of the year, 100 more than last year. Boston set a record of 148 and Houston police reported 617 killings, the highest since 701 in 1981. Police in all those cities blamed drugs and guns for the wave of murders and most also blamed teenage gang warfare. "Many parts of the city have turned into war zones," said a Los Angeles City official, "mostly made up of youths, fighting for territory." Police singled out narcotics as the cause of about a third of the murders in many of America's biggest cities. But the most worrying trend was that increasingly youngsters, police in the biggest cities added. "There's a viciousness out there on the street with people with weapons," New Orleans police superintendent Warren Woodfork told the Washington Post. "They don't care if they live or die, it seems, or if you live or die."